

CIA Director John Brennan pauses during a news conference at CIA headquarters in Langley, Va., Thursday, Dec. 11, 2014. Brennan defending his agency from accusations in a Senate report that it used inhumane interrogation techniques against terrorist suspect with no security benefits to the nation.
(AP Photo/Pablo Martinez Monsivais)

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CIA Chief Challenges US Senate Torture Report

KEN DILANIAN

AP Intelligence Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — CIA Director John Brennan acknowledged Thursday that “abhorrent” tactics were used on terror detainees but stopped short of claiming that the tough methods saved thousands of American lives.

He said it was “unknown and unknowable” whether the harsh treatment during George W. Bush’s presidency yielded crucial intelligence that could have been gained in any other way.

Responding to the Senate torture report, Brennan recounted the horrors of the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, his agency’s determination to prevent more such assaults and the fact that CIA officers were the first to fight and early to die in the Afghanistan war. The CIA, he said, “did a lot of things right” in a time when there were “no easy answers.”

Brennan criticized the Senate intelligence committee’s investigation on multiple fronts, saying, for example, it was “lamentable” that the committee interviewed no CIA personnel to ask “what were you thinking” and “what was the calculus you used” in determining interrogation practices. Without that, he said, “you lose the opportunity to really understand what was taking place at the time.”

Even so, on the central contentious point of this week’s report — its conclusion that none of the torture or

other brutal interrogation methods produced critical, life-saving intelligence — Brennan said that cannot be proved one way or the other.

Valuable information was indeed obtained after the harsh interrogations, he said, including some on Sept. 11 mastermind Osama bin Laden. But he added it was impossible to know whether the detainees provided that information because of the “enhanced interrogation techniques.” He said the cause-and-effect relationship is “unknown and unknowable.”

Bush approved the program through a covert finding in 2002 but wasn’t briefed by the CIA on the details until 2006.

President Barack Obama banned harsh interrogation tactics upon taking office, calling the treatment “torture.” But he has shown little interest in holding accountable anyone involved, a sore point among human rights groups and his supporters on the left.

Brennan refused to say whether he considered the techniques to be torture, declining to even use the word in his 40 minutes of remarks and answers to questions.

As he spelled out his objections to the report, the office of Democratic Sen. Dianne Feinstein, head of the Senate intelligence committee, unleashed a barrage of tweets challenging him. One said that “every fact” in the committee’s report was based on CIA



Senate Intelligence Committee Chair Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., center, and Sen. Roger Wicker, R-Miss., right, rush to the Senate floor on Capitol Hill in Washington, Thursday, Dec. 11, 2014. Earlier this week, Feinstein released a report on the CIA’s harsh interrogation techniques at secret overseas facilities after the 9/11 terror attacks.

(AP Photo/J. Scott Applewhite)

records, cables or other evidence.

Brennan denied that the CIA intentionally misled lawmakers, and he spoke up forcefully for agency employees, “a workforce that was trying to do the right thing” even though some came up short.

“We take exceptional pride in providing truth

to power,” he said pointedly, “whether that power agrees with what we say or not and regardless of political party.”

The Senate report does not urge prosecution for wrongdoing, and the U.S. Justice Department has no interest in reopening a criminal probe. But the threat to former interrogators and

their superiors was underlined Wednesday as a U.N. special investigator demanded those responsible for “systematic crimes” be brought to justice, and human rights groups pushed for the arrest of key CIA and Bush administration figures if they travel overseas. Current and former CIA officials pushed back, determined to paint the Senate report as a political stunt by Senate Democrats.

In a formal 136-page rebuttal, the CIA suggested Senate Democrats searched through millions of documents to pull out only the evidence backing up predetermined conclusions.

Tenet, the director on Sept. 11, 2001, said the interrogation program “saved thousands of Americans lives” while the country faced a “ticking time bomb every day.”

Former Vice President Dick Cheney also pushed back, saying in a Fox News interview that the Senate report “is full of crap.” □

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White House swings behind \$1.1T US spending bill

DAVID ESPO
ANDREW TAYLOR
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — House Republican leaders narrowly quelled a revolt among their conservatives Thursday, then worked to overcome Democratic opposition to legislation to provide \$1.1 trillion in U.S. government spending and chart a new course for selected, highly shaky pension plans.

The White House said President Barack Obama would sign the measure, triggering a rare public rebuke from Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi, who said she was disappointed. "It is a compromise and it does fulfill some of the many of the top-line priorities that the president himself has long identified," said White House press secretary Josh Earnest. He also said Obama did object to other portions of the 1,764-page spending and pen-



Senators, from left, Sen. Mark Pryor, D-Ark., Sen. Bob Corker, R-Tenn., Sen. James Risch, R-Idaho, Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., and Sen. Orrin G. Hatch, R-Utah, rush to the Senate floor on Capitol Hill in Washington, Thursday, Dec. 11, 2014, for a procedural vote to advance the \$585 billion defense bill. (AP Photo/J. Scott Applewhite)

sion measure. The developments coincided with the approach of a midnight expiration of existing federal funding, but there was no threat of

a government shutdown — or even evidence of the attendant brinkmanship so pervasive in recent years. There was unusual drama in the House, though, on

the final major bill of a two-year Congress. Conservatives sought to torpedo the measure because it leaves Obama's immigration policy unchal-

lenged. But Speaker John Boehner patrolled the noisy, crowded House floor looking for enough Republican converts to keep it afloat.

He found them — after the vote went into overtime — in retiring Rep. Kerry Bentivolio and Rep. Marlin Stutzman. The vote to allow the measure to advance was 214-212.

The spending measure is one of a handful on the year-end agenda, with the others ranging from an extension of expiring tax breaks to a bill approving Obama's policy for arming Syrian forces fighting Islamic State forces.

The \$1.1 trillion legislation provides funding for nearly the entire government through the end of the budget year next Sept. 30, and locks in cuts negotiated in recent years between the White House and a tea party-heavy Republican rank and file. □

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Senate committee votes for war powers to fight IS

DEB RIECHMANN
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Senate Foreign Relations Committee on Thursday voted to authorize President Barack Obama's war against the Islamic State group — the first vote in Congress to explicitly grant him war powers in the U.S. battle against the militant extremists.

The vote was 10-8, with most Democrats in favor and Republicans opposed. The committee chairman, Sen. Robert Menendez said he would seek a full Senate vote on the measure before the current Congress ends, but it's more likely that the authorization will be delayed until the next,

Republican-led Congress, which starts Jan. 1.

In the U.S. battle against IS, Obama has been relying on congressional authorizations that former President George W. Bush used to justify military action after 9/11. Critics say the White House's use of post-9/11 congressional authorizations is a legal stretch, at best. Obama has insisted that he had the legal authority to send about 3,000 U.S. troops to train and assist Iraqi security forces, and launch 1,100 airstrikes against targets in Iraq and Syria since September. More recently, the president has said that he wants a new authorization for use of military force. □

In Bridgegate Case,

Prosecutors could use fraud statute to bring charges



New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie speaks to reporters during the National Governors Association meeting in Nashville, Tenn. Under a rarely-used provision of a federal statute, prosecutors investigating last year's lane closures here may argue that Gov. Chris Christie's associates committed fraud.

(Joe Buglewicz/The New York Times)

KATE ZERNIKE

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Federal prosecutors investigating the lane closings at the George Washington Bridge last year are considering charges based on a rarely used provision of a fraud statute, under which they could argue that associates of Gov. Chris Christie of New Jersey used the bridge for a purpose other than its intended one. The statute can be used against members of any government agency that receives more than \$10,000

a year in federal money - which could include the state or the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, which operates the bridge - and it is typically used to elevate offenses committed by local officials into federal crimes.

People with knowledge of the case say prosecutors have not settled on a legal theory for any charges. But even identifying a possible theory is significant; a big question since the U.S. attorney in New Jersey began investigating the

bridge scandal in January has been whether the lane closings violated any federal law. While one possible scenario would be to charge people involved with official misconduct, that is a state, not a federal, crime.

The statute, Section 666 of Title 18 of the U.S. code concerning theft or bribery in programs receiving federal funds, is commonly used in cases of fraud or embezzlement. But it would be novel - if not unprecedented in New Jersey - for prosecu-

tors to bring charges using the particular clause of the statute being examined in this case, against anyone who "intentionally misapplies property" under the control of the agency.

The investigation by the U.S. attorney for New Jersey, Paul J. Fishman, is one of three continuing inquiries into the lane closings and allegations of misconduct at the Port Authority that spun out of the bridge scandal.

That scandal broke open in January when emails subpoenaed by a New Jersey legislative committee revealed that a deputy chief of staff to Christie, Bridget Anne Kelly, sent an email to one of his associates at the Port Authority calling

for "some traffic problems in Fort Lee."

The town was gridlocked for four days the previous September when the Port Authority abruptly shut down two access lanes to the bridge.

Complaints from the town's mayor, Mark Sokolich, to the governor's office and the Port Authority went unanswered, and Sokolich later accused the Christie administration of punishing him because he had declined entreaties to endorse the governor for re-election.

Fishman is said to be acutely aware that any indictments have the potential to undermine the governor's aspirations to run for president.

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In Newtown, mental health problems still emerging

PAT EATON-ROBB
Associated Press
NEWTOWN, Connecticut

(AP) — Anxiety, depression, guilt, sleeplessness, marital strife, drug and alcohol abuse — two years after the massacre at a Connecticut elementary school, the scope of the psychological damage to children, parents and others is becoming clear, and the need for treatment is likely to persist a long time.

With the second anniversary of the Newtown shooting rampage approaching Sunday, agencies have been working to set up a support system for the next 12 to 15 years, as the youngest survivors approach adulthood.

A young man with a semi-automatic rifle killed 20 children and six educators on Dec. 14, 2012, at Sandy Hook Elementary School before committing suicide. The gunman, Adam Lanza, had killed his mother at home before heading to the school.

Connecticut and a handful of other states passed stricter gun control laws in the aftermath of the tragedy, but President Barack Obama failed to push federal legislation through Congress that sought universal background checks for gun buyers and other measures.

Mental health officials in Newtown say the demand for treatment is high, with many people reporting substance abuse, relationship troubles, disorganization, depression, overthinking or inability to sleep, all related to the attack.

Some of the problems are just now coming to the surface.

"We've found the issues are more complex in the second year," said Joseph Erardi, Newtown's school superintendent. "A lot of people were running on adrenaline the first year."

Beth Hegarty happened to be inside the school

one of the daughters wasn't paying attention in class; she was staring at the doorway.

Hegarty and her girls are among the many in this close-knit town of 27,000 who have taken advantage of counseling and other programs made

"I was super reactive to everything. I would fly off the handle on a whim. I was emotional. I couldn't handle crowds or loud noises," said Hegarty, who took cover under a desk during the shooting while the principal and psychologist she had been meeting with died. "For my girls, there is less running down the hallway in the middle of the night and climbing into my bed. They want to go more places instead of staying at home all the time."

Newtown has received about \$15 million in grants from the U.S. Education Department and the U.S. Justice Department to support its recovery.

The Newtown-Sandy Hook Community Foundation, which oversees the biggest pot of private donations made to Newtown, has about \$4 million left after paying out more than \$7 million to the families of the 26 victims and other children who were in the same classrooms but survived.

Newtown Youth and Family Services, the main mental health agency, has quadrupled its counseling staff, adding 29 positions in the months following the shootings, Executive Director Candice Bohr said. She said the federal grant money that recently came through will help cover its costs.

Jennifer Barahona, director of the foundation overseeing the private dollars, said the group has been spending about \$60,000 a month on one-on-one counseling for people who have no insurance or whose insurers won't cover such treatment. She said more people are reaching out for help every day. □



In this photo provided by the Resiliency Center of Newtown, a chalk board painted column is displayed at the center in Newtown, Conn. Founded after the 2012 Sandy Hook Elementary shootings, the center offers the community mental and emotional health programs that include art, music and play therapy. (AP Photo/Resiliency Center of Newtown)

the day of the shooting with her three daughters, all of whom survived.

The Hegarty children have had trouble sleeping and difficulty with loud noises and crowds. Whenever they leave the house, they look for places they can hide in case something bad happens. In February, a school counselor suggested the family seek help because

available through millions in grants and donations. The family has been receiving support from Newtown's Resiliency Center, an organization formed after the shooting that has seen rising demand for its offerings, which include art, music and play therapy. Hegarty said the programs have helped her become more "even-keeled." □

Pew poll:

More Americans support gun rights over gun controls

TIMOTHY WILLIAMS
© 2014 New York Times

Two years after the mass school shooting in Newtown, Connecticut, a majority of Americans say it is more important to protect the right to own guns than for the government to limit access to firearms, a Pew Research Center survey released this week found.

The center said in a statement that it was the first time in two decades of its surveys on attitudes about firearms that a majority of Americans have expressed more support for gun ownership rights than for gun control.

Fifty-two percent of respondents said it was more important to protect gun ownership rights, while 46 percent said the priority should be controlled access to firearms.

In a 2000 Pew survey, 29 percent chose gun rights over gun control, and in a 2013 survey conducted a month after the Newtown shooting, 45 percent favored gun rights.

"To some extent, this is the continuation of a trend," said Jocelyn Kiley, associate director for research at the Pew Research Center. "It may be that Newtown stunted that trend to some extent." On Dec. 14, 2012, Adam Lanza, 20, fatally shot 20 children and six adults at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown before killing himself in one of the deadliest mass shootings in U.S. history.

The Pew poll on firearms, conducted in early December, also found that blacks have become increasingly likely to believe that firearm ownership does more to protect people than it does to threaten an individual's safety, even as they continue to support gun control measures. □

US Financial Front:

Holiday shopping boosts American retail sales

JOSH BOAK
AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. retail sales perked up in November, as cheaper gas and an improving job market fueled a promising start to the holiday shopping season.

Retail sales rose a seasonally-adjusted 0.7 percent, the most in eight months, the Commerce Department said Thursday. Falling gasoline prices dented gas stations receipts by 0.8 percent, but that appears to have freed up money that consumers took elsewhere. Excluding gas stations, sales climbed a healthy 0.9 percent. Spending on motor vehicles accelerated 1.7 percent, while purchases at clothiers, online retailers, electronics stores and department stores all expanded. Non-store retailers, which include online and mail-order outlets, rose 1 percent.

The figures indicate that consumers have pumped up their holiday shopping, despite initial signs within the retail industry that Black Friday was weak this year. To extract more dollars, stores are plying shoppers with big discounts and other enticements — a trend that will likely continue into the season's finale.

Over the past 12 months, retail sales are up 5.1 percent. "In the months ahead, we expect consumers keep spending the extra income gained from the strong job market and the collapse in energy prices," said Laura Rosner, an analyst at the bank BNP Paribas. Average national gas prices have slid to \$2.64 a gallon, down nearly 30 cent, or 9.8 percent, over the past month, according to the AAA's Daily Fuel Gauge.

Many analysts believe that holiday spending could rise by at least 4 percent this year because of recent job growth as well. A hiring spree since February has bolstered the number of people with steady paychecks by nearly 2.65 million, and consumer confidence has also brightened.

Employers added 321,000 jobs in November, and the unemployment rate held steady at 5.8 percent, the Labor Department reported last week.

Still, some preliminary indicators suggested that the Thanksgiving and Black Friday weekend was disappointing for retailers.

An estimated 133.7 million people shopped in stores and online, down 5.2 percent from a year ago, according to a survey of 4,631 people conducted by Prosper Insights & Analytics for the National Retail Federation. Total spending for the weekend was projected to fall 11 percent to \$50.9 billion from a year ago.

That hints at the absence of meaningful wage gains for many workers, despite recent job growth. Average hourly wages have risen just 2.1 percent over the past 12 months, slightly ahead of inflation.

But consumer behavior is also shifting. Stores pushed Black Friday deals days or weeks earlier than Thanksgiving weekend. That has created fatigue over the Thanksgiving weekend sales bonanza. The NRF has said that its survey offers a snapshot in time and is not tied to its economic forecast. Rather, it shows how shoppers remain cautious and will look for discounts and deals.

Also, there are signs of people forgoing smaller expenditures to replace bigger ticket items such as automobiles.

Motor vehicles sold in November at an annualized clip of 17.2 million, a 4.6 percent increase from the prior year, according to Autodata Corp.

Subaru and Chrysler led the major automakers with sales increases around 20 percent on strong demand for their small SUVs.

Retailers still need to lure the procrastinators who haven't yet completed their holiday buying. Wal-Mart Stores Inc., the world's largest retailer, launched one-day free shipping that will last until Friday. □



A woman shops at the Century 21 Department Store in Philadelphia. The Commerce Department released retail sales data for October on Thursday, Dec. 11, 2014.

(AP Photo/Matt Rourke)



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UK and Irish premiers take charge of Belfast talks

S. POGATCHNIK
Associated Press

DUBLIN (AP) — The British and Irish prime ministers took control Thursday of multi-party talks on Northern Ireland's future with survival of the region's Catholic-Protestant government at stake.

The arrival of David Cameron and Enda Kenny in Belfast harkened back to the highest-pressure moments in Northern Ireland's two-decade peace process, when leaders from Lon-

don and Dublin frequently worked together to coax polarized local parties toward compromise.

Speaking outside the negotiating venue, Cameron said he and Kenny would press local leaders to concede ground to their rivals once again so that Northern Ireland's five-party administration, led by the Irish Catholics of Sinn Fein and British Protestants of the Democratic Unionist Party, could be repaired. Local leaders, in turn, made their

own mostly financial demands.

Cameron said talks expected to run through Saturday represented "the crucial phase" of a 9-week-old diplomatic push, with all sides agreed that a deal or defeat must be declared by Dec. 24. Failure could mean the 2015 collapse of the local administration and a restoration of direct London rule, the system that prevailed from 1972 through most of the early 2000s.

The Democratic Unionist-Sinn Fein alliance was forged in 2007 after the outlawed Irish Republican Army renounced violence and disarmed, and the IRA-linked Sinn Fein voted to accept Northern Ireland's police.

Such power-sharing between former enemies was the central goal of the U.S.-brokered 1998 Good Friday peace accord.

Sinn Fein and the Democratic Unionists have remained united when chal-

lenged by attacks from IRA die-hards who reject the cease-fire.

But over the past year, their unlikely partnership has degenerated into open contempt on an ever-growing list of often symbolic disputes.

Unresolved issues include promotion of the Gaelic language, the parading rights of hard-line Protestant groups and how best to investigate unsolved slayings from a 45-year conflict that has left 3,700 dead. □

Hong Kong:

Police remove protesters as dismantling of camp proceeds

KEITH BRADSHAW
CHRIS BUCKLEY

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HONG KONG - Dozens of prominent members of Hong Kong's pro-democracy movement gave themselves up for arrest in a show of defiance Thursday after police swept through a protest camp, tearing down tents, posters and speakers' platforms that had given voice to anger over the government's restrictive election plans.

For 11 weeks, the street camp in the Admiralty district near the city government offices was an impassioned forum for public discontent, drawing in tens of thousands of people at its peak.

But after the police received orders to clear the site, the end came swiftly. On Thursday morning, officers cleared a patch of the camp, and in the afternoon they massed, encircling the rest of the site and warning people to leave.



Police officers take away a protester at the occupied area outside government headquarters in Hong Kong Thursday, Dec. 11, 2014. Hong Kong police on Thursday took away demonstrators who refused to leave the main pro-democracy protest camp and tore down their tents in a final push to retake streets occupied by activists for two and a half months.

(AP Photo/Kin Cheung)

Hundreds of protesters

stayed, risking arrest after officers surrounded the area and issued repeated

warnings to depart. The holdouts included a roll call of Hong Kong's pro-

democracy movement: lawyers, legislators, student leaders and Jimmy Lai, the media mogul who has regularly challenged the Chinese government.

Lee Cheuk-yan, a long-time labor leader and pro-democracy lawmaker who was among the group waiting to be detained, said, "Our determination is the message we want to give out."

As she was escorted by two police officers to a nearby police bus, Claudia Mo, a pro-democratic member of the city legislature, shouted, "We will be back." Martin Lee, a prominent lawyer and veteran pro-democratic politician, followed her.

At a news conference Thursday evening, police said they had arrested 209 people at a sit-in at the protest site, and four more away from the encampment. □

French-Mali sweep kills Islamic radical commander

PARIS (AP) — A militant Islamic commander who was the subject of a multi-million-dollar bounty issued by the United States has been killed in a French and Malian military operation in northeastern Mali, French defense officials said Thursday.

Ahmed el Tilemsi, a leader of the Mourabitoune militant group, was killed in an overnight operation Wednesday near the town

of Gao, the officials said. The French Defense Ministry's Web site says about 10 militants in total were "neutralized" during the sweep — meaning they were killed or taken prisoner.

It said the operation dealt "a heavy blow" to Mourabitoune and other terrorists in Africa's Sahel-Sahara region.

Col. Gilles Jaron, a military spokesman, said French forces who were working

on intelligence information came into contact with an armed group outside Gao and a firefight quickly ensued.

No French troops were injured, he said, declining to specify the number of French forces or type of military assets involved.

France has about 1,200 troops operating in Gao and other parts of vast northeastern Mali as part of a five-nation counterterror-

ism operation codenamed Barkhane, Jaron said. Since August alone, more than 50 militants have been neutralized and several tons of weapons have been seized by French and Malian forces.

El Tilemsi was a founding member of the militant Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa that fused with forces loyal to terror leader Mokhtar Belmokhtar to form Mourabi-

towne. Belmokhtar is seen by many as the most dangerous man in the Sahara: His loyalists led a brazen and deadly attack on a natural gas facility at Ain Amenas, Algeria, last year.

Jaron said El Tilemsi was considered the group's leader in the Sahel. Two years ago, the U.S. State Department offered a reward of up to \$5 million for information leading to his location. □



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Putin and Modi reaffirm bond between Russia and India

ELLEN BARRY

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NEW DELHI - As expected, the longtime allies Russia and India signed a raft of agreements here at their leaders' annual summit meeting Thursday, expanding their usual set of projects to an ambitious agenda that includes joint manufacture of military helicopters and production of nuclear reactors.

But the most intriguing event of the day occurred across town in a private dining room at a luxury hotel, where Sergei Aksyonov, the prime minister of Crimea, the Ukrainian territory annexed this year by Russia, signed a memorandum of understanding with a group of Indian businessmen who have named themselves the "Indo-Crimean Partnership."

Aksyonov, 42, organized a paramilitary force on the Crimean Peninsula early this year as pro-Western protests rose in Kiev, the Ukrainian capital, and he was one of the first people to be singled out by the United States for sanctions. He traveled to India on a plane that carried Russian officials attending the summit meeting, and was flanked by senior Russian diplomats, whom he credited with arranging the event. Interfax, the Russian news agency, said it was Aksyonov's "first international visit."

But both Indian and Russian officials said Aksyonov had not come as part of the official Russian delegation, and a spokesman for India's foreign minister said he had not been consulted about the planned event. Russia's embassy in New Delhi had invited reporters to the event with Aksyonov, then announced hours lat-

er that the press event had been canceled.

As for Aksyonov, he said he had come to India so he could follow up on an overture from Gul Kripalani, a Mumbai seafood merchant. "Business is looking for the best place - a place that is calm, where you can protect your capital, where it is possible to increase your economic indicators," Aksyonov said. "So Crimea is a priority place."

For President Vladimir Putin of Russia, the brief visit to India served a crucial function this year, reassuring his domestic audience that Russia has not been too damaged by its growing isolation from the West. The Indian prime minister, Narendra Modi, is enjoying a period of global celebrity after sweeping the general election six months ago. He has also attracted rapt attention from Washington - President Barack Obama has agreed to visit on India's Republic Day in January, a date that required him to reschedule his State of the Union address. India has rarely surveyed such a range of potential partners. In comments Thursday, Modi lingered on the subject of historic loyalty, which has bound India and Russia even as their joint agenda stagnated. Decades after the Bangladesh war in 1971, many officials still bring up the Soviet Union's support when America was allied with Pakistan.

"The steadfast support of the people of Russia for India has been there even at difficult moments in our history, it has been a pillar of strength," Modi said. "India, too, has always stood with Russia through its own challenges."

Modi publicly reassured Putin that "even if India's



Indian Bollywood actor Sonam Kapoor, right, helps Prime Minister Narendra Modi, center, and Russian President Vladimir Putin light a lamp at the World Diamond Conference in New Delhi, India, Thursday, Dec. 11, 2014. Putin was holding talks with Indian leaders Thursday to strengthen trade and energy cooperation with Asia's third-largest economy as Western sanctions threaten to push his country's economy to the brink of a recession.

(AP Photo/ Saurabh Das)

options have increased," Russia would remain India's top defense supplier, en-

suring a predictable flow of income as Russia weathers falling oil prices and a weak

economy. In response, Putin pledged to supply India with 20 nuclear reactors, and Russia's state oil company agreed to supply Essar, a private company, with a 10-year, fixed-price contract for oil that one official said was worth \$5 billion.

The agreements suggest that the relations between the two countries are more robust than many think, said Nandan Unnikrishnan, a senior fellow at the Observer Research Foundation in New Delhi.

"Given Russia's isolation by the West and the slump in the economy, people thought it would fail to infuse any energy into the Indo-Russian deal," he said. "But that is not what has happened."

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Israel blamed for death of Palestinian minister

KARIN LAUB

Associated Press

RAMALLAH, West Bank (AP)

— The Palestinian government blamed Israel on Thursday for the sudden death of a Cabinet minister, citing preliminary autopsy results — disputed by Israeli pathologists — that he died from a blow during a confrontation with Israeli troops.

The contradictory interpretations of a joint autopsy on the minister, Ziad Abu Ain, threatened to further inflame tensions between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, amid demands from an angry Palestinian public to halt security cooperation with Israeli forces in the West Bank.

Pathologists disagreed on the main cause of death, with Palestinian doctors saying the 55-year-old Cabinet minister died from a blow to the body and Israeli doctors saying he had a heart attack.

"The results of the autopsy show that the ones who killed the martyr Ziad Abu Ain are the Israeli occupying forces," Palestin-



Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, center, attends the funeral procession of the late Palestinian cabinet member Ziad Abu Ain at the Palestinian Authority headquarters in the West Bank city of Ramallah, Thursday, Dec. 11, 2014. Israeli and Palestinian pathologists disagreed Thursday on whether a blow to the body or a bad heart was the main cause of death of the Palestinian Cabinet minister who collapsed shortly after scuffling with Israeli troops during a West Bank protest.

(AP Photo/Nasser Nasser)

ian Health Minister Jawad Awad said. Despite the findings, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas appeared in no rush to comply with demands to halt security coordination with Israeli forces. The policy is highly unpopular, particularly at times of heightened tensions. However, the alliance of Israeli and Palestin-

ian security forces against a shared foe, the Islamic militant Hamas, has helped insure Abbas' continued rule in the autonomous areas of the West Bank.

Abbas has also been leery of turning a strained relationship with Israel into a confrontational one, despite repeated warnings

that he would seek international sanctions against Israel in the absence of meaningful talks on Palestinian statehood.

Abu Ain died Wednesday following a confrontation between Palestinian protesters and Israeli soldiers that included pushing and shoving. At one

point, a member of Israel's paramilitary border police grabbed Abu Ain by the throat and pushed him. Troops also fired tear gas during the clashes.

Several minutes after the scuffle, Abu Ain collapsed, clutching his heart. He received first aid and was evacuated, but died en route to a hospital. An autopsy was conducted later Wednesday by Palestinian, Jordanian and Israeli pathologists. Citing preliminary findings, Palestinian pathologist Dr. Saber Aloul, said Thursday that "the cause of death was a blow, and not natural causes." He said some of Abu Ain's front teeth broke off and dropped to the back of his mouth as a result of trauma to his face. He also noted bruises on both sides of the neck, the back of the tongue and the windpipe, which he said appeared to be caused by force.

The Palestinian pathologist also cited bleeding in the coronary artery and said it was a result of "anguish and stress." □

Yemen's al-Qaida: Obama to blame for hostage deaths

AHMED AL-HAJJ

Associated Press

SANAA, Yemen (AP)

— A top al-Qaida leader in Yemen on Thursday blamed President Barack Obama for the deaths last week of an American and a South African hostage in a failed U.S. rescue operation.

The video message by Nasr bin Ali al-Ansi, posted on one of the militant group's Twitter accounts, was the first comment by al-Qaida's Yemeni branch on the killings of Luke Somers and Pierre Korkie. The two were killed when U.S. special forces attacked an al-Qaida safe house attempting to rescue American photojournalist Somers. Officials said U.S. forces did not know that he and Korkie, a South African schoolteacher, were being held together.

About 40 U.S. special operations forces, backed

by Yemeni ground forces, were involved in the half-hour rescue attempt in Shabwa province, which followed U.S. drone strikes in the area east of the capital of Sanaa, U.S. officials said. After a firefight with militants, the rescuers eventually reached the men and found them alive but gravely wounded. They both died shortly after as medics tried to save them. Al-Ansi said he warned the U.S. against such attempts after an earlier, first rescue attempt in November also failed. He accused Obama of recklessness, and said the raid "caused things to go in a completely different way than we wanted." Obama said he ordered the raid because the 33-year-old Somers was believed to be in "imminent danger." The president condemned Somers' killing as a "barbaric murder."

Al-Ansi described the rescue operation as an "execution order" and claimed that poorly equipped militants fended off heavily armed U.S. forces for nearly three hours.

Initial al-Qaida demands were never clear. Al-Ansi on Thursday claimed that al-Qaida wanted to negotiate the release of detainees held at Guantanamo Bay. He also mentioned Sheik Omar Abdel-Rahman, known as the "Blind Sheik", who is serving a life sentence in the United States on a terrorism conviction. "They could have at least negotiated with us about some clauses or shown sincerity," he added. Al-Ansi also warned that al-Qaida would continue to "put the lives of all Americans in danger inside and outside of America ... in the air, on the ground and in the sea." □



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Christmas Truce of 1914:

A Century Later, Mythic Thud of Ball Still Heard

RAF CASERT
AP Sports Writer

PLOEGSTEERT, Belgium (AP)

— On the side of a wind-swept field covered with scorpion weed, a simple wooden cross marks a unique event in football history.

At its base, amid wreaths of poppies, lie a smattering of balls and various club pennants, all in remembrance of the Christmas Truce of 1914.

A century ago on Christmas Day, German and British enemies left their World War I trenches and headed into no man's land in a few scattered locations on the Western Front for an unofficial truce among soldiers.

Some eyewitness accounts say they were highlighted by something as remarkable as a few football kickabouts.

"Suddenly a Tommy came with a football," wrote Lt. Johannes Niemann of Germany, referring to a British soldier. "Teams were quickly established for a match on the frozen mud, and the Fritzies beat the Tommies 3-2."

If not fully-fledged matches, other soldier's diaries and various reports also spoke of balls being kicked about in friendship.

"A huge crowd was between the trenches. Someone produced a little rubber ball so of course a football match started," Lt. Charles Brockbank of Britain's Cheshire Regiment wrote in his diary, which is part of "The Greater Game" exhibit at the National Football Museum in Manchester.

The proponents of the sport have cherished that day as historic proof that there is little that can better bridge man's differences than football.

This Christmas, the British supermarket chain Sainsbury's has taken the idea and turned it into a blockbuster ad, showing oppos-

ing soldiers living the truce amid a football match at the center of the heart-tugging, some say sanitized, view of that Great War day. Michel Platini, the president of Europe soccer's governing body, underscored that unique mood of brotherhood at the unveiling of the Christmas monument on Thursday on the former battlegrounds known as Flanders Fields in western

that pushed them over the edge of their trenches, unarmed.

The war had started on Aug. 4 when the German invasion of Belgium kicked off a series of events which quickly pitted the German and Austro-Hungarian empires against Britain, France, Russia and several allies.

Germany swept into most of Belgium and northern France and even threat-

300,000 soldiers by Christmas.

"Who would have expected that after all this killing, that Christmas, soldiers would climb out of their trenches," German ambassador Eckart Cuntz said.

Football players themselves had been involved in the fighting from the early days. Of the 5,000 professional players at the time, about 2,000 joined the armed

Christmas, a move which inspired others to join, said Peter Francis of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. Seven members of that team were killed in the war.

One of the first footballers killed in the war was Larrett Roebuck, a Huddersfield defender.

After playing for his team in a 1-0 victory at Leicester Fosse early in the 1914-15



UEFA President Michel Platini, right, and the Mayor of Ploegsteert Gilbert Deleu, left, listen to speeches after unveiling a World War I Christmas Truce monument in Ploegsteert, Belgium on Thursday, Dec. 11, 2014. The monument was constructed to commemorate soldiers who took part in a spontaneous truce on some sites of the front line during the First World War.

(AP Photo/Virginia Mayo)

Belgium, scene of some of the most horrendous killing. The monument is a steel ball sitting on the remains of a World War I shell.

"(In Ploegsteert) and probably elsewhere on the immense frontline from the North Sea to Switzerland, they get a football out, or a ball of cloth, and they started kicking it," Platini said. For those involved in 1914, it was most of all a yearning for a sense of normalcy, however momentarily,

ened Paris before the frontline was settled. Armies entrenched themselves for most of the next four years. At the time, though, the prevailing expectation on both sides had been to be home for Christmas.

When that didn't happen, an early sense of euphoria quickly made way for unrelenting gloom. It set the stage for the Christmas truce and those magic kickabouts.

Germany alone had lost

forces. Sometimes whole lineups signed up at the same time to create what became known as the Footballers' Battalions.

London club Clapton Orient, now known as Leyton Orient, alone had about 40 players and staff joining the war effort, all following the steps of their team captain. Scotland's top team at the time, Edinburgh club Hearts, had its whole team join the British army one month ahead of that

season, he left for the Western Front and was killed in action on the eve of the first Battle for Ypres, a few kilometers from that patch of land in Ploegsteert.

"The story is that he set off running across the field with the machine guns going," said Roebuck's grandson, Frank Wood.

"His friend saw him go down but he couldn't stop to help him. With the fight like that, you couldn't stop."

In Cuba; US co-opted hip-hop scene to spark change

Associated Press

HAVANA (AP) — A U.S. agency's secret infiltration of Cuba's underground hip-hop groups scene to spark a youth movement against the government was "reckless" and "stupid," Sen. Patrick Leahy said Thursday after The Associated Press revealed the operation.

On at least six occasions, Cuban authorities detained or interrogated people involved in the program; they also confiscated computer hardware that in some cases contained information that jeopardized Cubans who likely had no idea they were caught up in a clandestine U.S. operation. Still, contractors working for the U.S. Agency for International Development kept putting themselves and their targets at risk, the AP investigation found.

Hip-hop artists who USAID contractors tried to promote either left the country or stopped performing after pressure from the Cuban government, and one of the island's most popular independent music festivals was taken over after officials linked it to USAID. "The conduct described suggests an alarming lack of concern for the safety of the Cubans involved, and anyone who knows Cuba could predict it would fail," said Leahy, a Vermont Democrat who is chairman of the State Department and Foreign Operations Appropriations Subcommittee. "USAID never informed Congress about this and should never have been associated with anything so incompetent and reckless. It's just plain stupid."

U.S. Sen. Jeff Flake also criticized USAID Thursday. "These actions have gone from boneheaded to a downright irresponsible use of U.S. taxpayer money," the Arizona Republican said.

The Cuban government issued no official response to the report, but the AP story led state-run television's afternoon news broadcast

and was featured prominently on the websites of government news outlets. The same contractors, Creative Associates, created a "Cuban Twitter" social network and dispatched

Then the Colombian rock star Juanes announced a September 2009 concert in the heart of Havana. Creative managers held a two-day strategy session on how to persuade

At one point, the contractors approached a government sex education institute run by President Raul Castro's daughter, Mariela, to be part of the EXIT Festival in Serbia, even as



Cuban musician Silvio Rodriguez talks during an interview with The Associated Press in Havana, Cuba. Documents obtained by The Associated Press show that a U.S. agency infiltrated Cuba's hip-hop scene, recruiting unwitting rappers to spark a youth movement against the government. (AP Photo/Ramon Espinosa)

inexperienced Latin American youth to recruit activists, operations that were the focus of previous AP stories.

"Any assertions that our work is secret or covert are simply false," USAID said. Creative Associates declined to comment.

At first, the hip-hop operation was run in Cuba by Serbian contractor Rajko Bozic, who headed public relations for the EXIT Festival, an annual music event that grew out of an anti-government student movement.

Bozic declined to talk about the Cuba program. The Serb homed in swiftly on Los Aldeanos, a hip-hop group frustrated by official pressure and widely respected by Cuban youth for its hard-hitting lyrics.

Creative used a Panama front company and a bank in Lichtenstein to hide the money trail from Cuba, where thousands of dollars went to fund a TV program starring Los Aldeanos. It would be distributed on DVDs to circumvent Cuba's censors.

Juanes to let Los Aldeanos perform with him.

It didn't happen, but Juanes publicly thanked the rappers after the concert and was photographed with them.

In a statement Wednesday, a Juanes spokesman said that the concert had no political agenda and that Juanes was unaware of the USAID activities.

A week after the concert, Los Aldeanos' charismatic front man, Aldo Rodriguez, was detained for illegal possession of a computer. Xavier Utset, who ran the program for Creative, saw the arrest as a "perfect test" of whether raising Aldo's profile would keep the rapper out of jail.

In the end, a relative of Aldo's turned to Silvio Rodriguez, himself a legendary singer. Rodriguez, in an AP interview in Havana, said he called a friend in Cuba's Culture Ministry and asked for the computer to be returned.

"When you find out you could be surrounded by a conspiracy, it's shocking," Rodriguez said.

its organizers were running the anti-Castro hip-hop operation.

Mariela Castro told the AP that her institute sent two representatives to the festival but didn't build deeper ties.

Contractors paid \$15,000 to underwrite an arts and music festival put on by the family of Pablo Milanes, the famed singer of "nueva trova" music and a man with close government ties. Their secret aim was to seed "the minds of festival organizers with new ideas" and persuade them to send "high-impact messages" to the audience, read one report.

Milanes' daughter, Suylen Milanes, said government officials showed up the day before the festival and warned her that she was associating with unsavory characters. They even showed her copies of Bozic's emails, which they called suspicious, she recalled. Her father declined to comment.

Clearly, Cuban officials had figured out what was going on.*

Briefs in the CARIBBEAN

Turks & Caicos appoints new chief of police

PROVIDENCIALES, Turks & Caicos Islands (AP) —

A former Scotland Yard commander has been appointed the new police commissioner in the Turks & Caicos Islands. Britain-appointed Gov. Peter Beckingham said Wednesday that James Smith will lead the British Caribbean territory's 280-member police force starting in February. He was chosen from a field of nearly 30 applicants. He will replace Colin Farquhar, a Canadian law enforcer who has reached the end of his contract on the island chain of roughly 50,000 people. Smith was a commander in London's Metropolitan Police Service and has also held senior posts with forces in Scotland and the Cayman Islands. Beckingham approves all senior public appointments in the British territory, which has one of the lowest crime rates in the Caribbean. □

Vieques beach closed as Navy clears munitions

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) —

Authorities have closed a beach in the popular Puerto Rican island of Vieques after finding pieces of inactive munition. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency says the U.S. Navy has so far removed objects including a projectile and a mortar tail. Officials say none of the objects found pose any danger to visitors. The Playa Grande beach area in the western region of the Vieques National Wildlife Refuge remained closed on Thursday. The U.S. Navy used Vieques as a bombing range from the 1940s until May 2003. It has spent about \$220 million so far to investigate and clean those lands. Resident Commissioner Pedro Pierluisi said Wednesday that Congress is seeking an additional \$17 million for cleanup efforts next year. □



Celebrating their one year anniversary in the Caribbean: Therapists from “Kalypso Therapy Sessions” back on Aruba!



EAGLE BEACH - The annually “Kalypso therapy session” on Aruba was held at the Divi Village and was attended by ladies of all ages and from all over the world. While enjoying a little wine, cheese and crackers, a twenty minute presentation and demonstration of the beautiful jewelry kept the invited guests attention, knowing that after the demonstration it would be time to try it on and create amazing combinations! This is how it works: simply twist blueberry off the ring and replace with plum, then try on the key lime or bubble gum color on the bracelet, matching it up with the earrings. So many combinations are possible. Not to mention that most of the ladies ended up ordering interchangeable jewelry sets.

This fantastic, Marietta, Ohio, USA based company, who officially launched “Kalypso TwistZ” on December first of 2013, sells true 925 Sterling Silver, interchangeable jewelry, using a variety of rings, pendants, bangles and earrings that allow interchangeability by simply choosing a top- per called an “Xpression”.

With the warranted fasten- ing system, you simply twist and lock it into place. It is invigorating and therapeutic, bright and full of color, and the first direct sales jewelry company to ever partner with the World Renowned Fenton Glass Company. With Fenton Glass, they have created the most exquisite, colorful beads to accommodate all types of jewelry lovers!

“Kalypso TwistZ” jewelry features a precision align- ing mechanism so you get many gorgeous looks from one piece of jewelry. It is about how you feel and knowing YOU are the one in charge. It is great to know you can match your jewelry to the color you are wearing! Elegant in the morning to WOW at night! All colors of the rainbow are available.

Kalypso TwistZ product line consists of several 925 Ster- ling Silver ring bases, ban- gles, pendants, and ear- ring bases. Currently there are over 100 Xpressions to choose from with new de- signs being designed and introduced quarterly. The Xpressions are set in 925 Sterling Silver with stones made from Quartz, Topaz,



Onyx, Mother of Pearl, Ab- alone, Czech Crystal and more.

On the picture taken at the fabulous Papiamento Res- taurant, you see Mr. Wayne & Mrs. Cheryl McAlarney, the founders of “Kalypso TwistZ”, with Cheryl being the CEO. President is Mrs. Bobbie Gingilonsky. Presi- dent Corporate Operations is Kaitlyn McAlarney. And four of the best therapists in the USA are: Deborah Emmons, Sandy Wright, Su- zette Masters and Meagan

Rech. They are having the time of their lives. Last night the famous Kukoo Kunuku party bus showed them around our beautiful island. By hosting parties called “group therapy sessions” yourself being called a hostess, you will not only love what you do, but you will show off amazing jew- elry that will practically sell itself with fun and laughter along the way. You will be compensated and reward- ed unlike any other party plan in the industry. Take

advantage of this fantastic ground floor opportunity to build your own exciting jewelry business “created in the Caribbean”

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Burns Family Honored at the Aruba Marriott Surf Club



PALM BEACH - Recently the Aruba Tourism Authority had the great pleasure of honoring a very nice couple as Distinguished Visitors, at the Marriott Surf Club. The symbolic honorary title is presented in the name of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation to guests who visit Aruba for

10-to-19 consecutive years. The honorees were Mr. Thomas and Mrs. Camille Burns from Kearny, New Jersey. Thomas and Camille are loyal members of the Marriott Surf Club and they love Aruba very much because of the friendly people, the climate, beaches, restau-

rants, relaxation and being on Aruba and staying at the Surf Club is like being home for them. The certificates were presented by Mr. Ernest Giel representing the Aruba Tourism Authority together with Mrs. Jenny Boekhoudt representing the Marriott Surf Club. □

Malott Family Honored at the Divi Tamarijn Resort



representing the Aruba Tourism Authority together with friends and family from the Divi Tamarijn Resort.

PALM BEACH - Recently the Aruba Tourism Authority had the great pleasure of honoring a very nice couple as Distinguished Visitors, at the Divi Tamarijn Resort. The symbolic honorary title is presented in the name of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation to guests who visit Aruba for 10-to-19 consecutive years. The honorees are Mr. Mike and Mrs. Reese Malott. Mike and Reese are loyal guests at the Divi Tamarijn Resort, and they love Aruba very much because of the friendly people, the climate, beaches, restaurants, relaxation and being on Aruba and staying at the Surf Club is like being home for them. The certificate was presented by Marouska Heyliger representing the Aruba Tourism Authority together with friends and family from the Divi Tamarijn Resort.



Marc and Ania Catona Honored

EAGLE BEACH - Recently, Marouska Heyliger honored Marc and Ania Catona from New Jersey with the Goodwill Ambassador certificate in the name of the Aruba Tourism Authority. The event which commemorates their 25th consecutive visit to the island was held at the La Quinta Resort. They love coming back to the island for the beautiful beaches, the friendly and welcoming people and great food. On the picture: The honorees together with Marouska of ATA.

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CBP Aruba Preclearance Streamlines Process:

New kiosks to automate functions, reduce wait times

ORANJESTAD - U.S. Customs and Border Protection Aruba Preclearance facility officially launched its new Automated Passport Control and Global Entry kiosks on Dec. 8 at the Queen Reina Beatrix Airport in Oranjestad, Aruba. U.S. Customs and Border Protection's processing of passengers at Queen Reina Beatrix International Airport will become more efficient with the unveiling of 10 Automated Passport Control and four Global Entry kiosks in the Aruba Preclearance facility.

These kiosks automate administrative functions of the border inspection process, reducing wait times and allowing CBP officers to focus more on the law enforcement mission.

"U.S. Customs and Border



Protection places a significant value on our public-private partnerships and we continue to collaborate on innovations to improve the passenger process," said CBP's Port Director of Preclearance Aruba James Grimes. "The Automated Passport Control and Global Entry kiosks are prime ex-

amples of these mutually beneficial partnerships."

Grimes joined Aruba Minister of Tourism Otmar Oduber, Aruba Airport Authority CEO James Fazio and Vancouver Airport Authority Vice President Anthony Gugliotta to officially cut the ribbon at the airport.

"This is the first step by the

Aruba Airport Authority in modernizing a growing regional airport and improving the departure process, said James Fazio, CEO of Aruba Airport Authority, "We look forward to our continued collaboration with our airport stakeholders and CBP to continue to enhance the passenger

experience."

The Aruba Minister of Tourism expressed his congratulations to the Aruba Airport Authority and CBP in inaugurating this project prior to the start of the winter holiday season by providing passengers with a more streamlined U.S. inspectional process. □



Old-style swaps dominate MLB winter meetings

By RONALD BLUM
AP Sports Writer

SAN DIEGO (AP) -- Baseball's winter meetings ended with an old-style spurt of swaps, with All-Stars switching teams at a rapid pace and executives scrambling to fill roster voids.

Alfredo Simon, Dee Gordon, Yoenis Cespedes, Miguel Montero, Jeff Samardzija, Brandon Moss, Dan Haren and Howie Kendrick were among the All-Stars dealt by the time teams headed home Thursday, and Matt Kemp and Jimmy Rollins were on the verge of switching clubs.

The Los Angeles and Chicago teams were the epicenter of change, along with the Miami Marlins.

Twelve trades involving 44 players were made over the four days, according to Major League Baseball, up from five swaps last year and three in 2012. There hadn't been this many trades at a winter meetings since 2006.

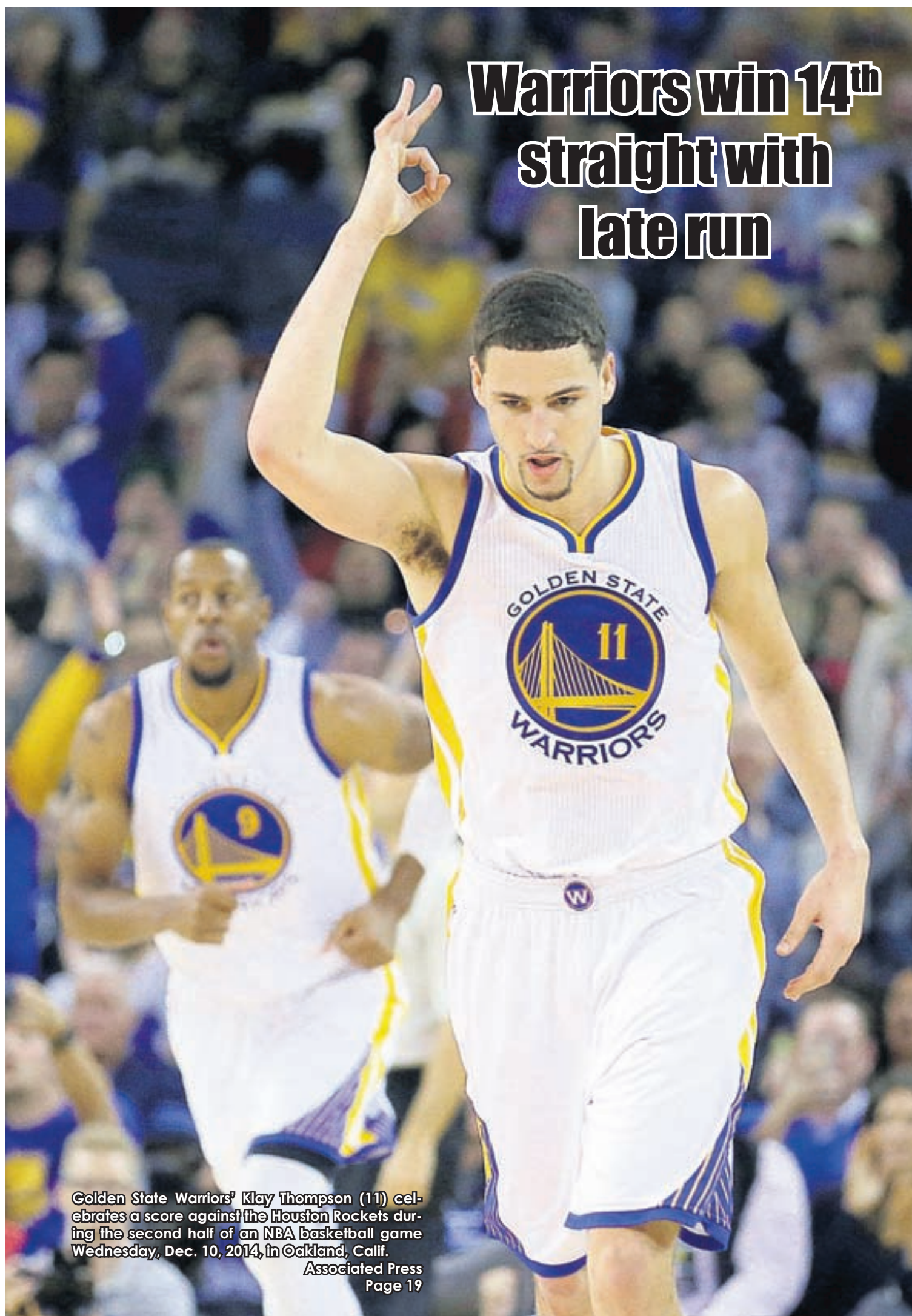
"People are motivated," Seattle general manager Jack Zduriencik said.

With major league revenues in the \$9 billion range, increased sharing and changes to rules for the amateur draft, more clubs have money to spend and large-market teams are more constrained.

The four organizations chasing San Francisco in the NL West all changed their top baseball front-office official since last year's gathering: Tony La Russa took over at the Diamondbacks, Andrew Friedman with the Dodgers, A. J. Preller with the Padres and Jeff Bridich with the Rockies. Matt Silverman replaced Friedman with the Rays.

Continued on Next Page

Warriors win 14th straight with late run



Golden State Warriors' Klay Thompson (11) celebrates a score against the Houston Rockets during the second half of an NBA basketball game Wednesday, Dec. 10, 2014, in Oakland, Calif.

Associated Press
Page 19

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MLB

Continued from
Previous Page

"People have been very, very aggressive," Detroit general manager Dave Dombrowski said. "Action starts more quickly, so when you get here I think you're prepared to move. Secondly, a lot of free agents started to sign. I think a lot of clubs were open-minded. There's been some change of regimes that have also contributed to that."

A \$155 million, six-year agreement between left-hander Jon Lester and the Cubs late Tuesday night seemed to break a market logjam.

In deals announced just before midnight Wednesday, the Dodgers acquired Kendrick from the Angels to play second and worked to obtain Rollins from Philadelphia in a remake of their middle infield. They dealt Gordon, Haren - who is mulling retirement - infielder Miguel Rojas and a player to be named or cash to the Marlins as part of a seven-player trade for left-hander Andrew Heaney, right-hander Chris Hatcher, infielder Kike Hernandez and catcher Austin Barnes.

The Dodgers then sent Heaney, considered one of baseball's top pitching prospects, to the Angels for Kendrick.

And as dawn broke, the Dodgers had a deal in place to send Kemp and catcher Tim Federowicz down Interstate 5 to San Diego for catcher Yasmani Grandal and two pitchers. The trade was pending physical exams and approval by the commissioner's office of the \$32 million the Dodgers will send the Padres to help offset the \$107 million remaining in the final five years of Kemp's deal.



In this Sept. 6, 2014, file photo, Boston Red Sox's Yoenis Cespedes follows through on a RBI double against the Toronto Blue Jays during the third inning of a baseball game at Fenway Park in Boston. The Red Sox have agreed to trade outfielder Yoenis Cespedes to the Detroit Tigers for pitcher Rick Porcello, according to a person familiar with the negotiations. Right-handed pitching prospect Alex Wilson also will go to Detroit as part of the trade, the person said Thursday, Dec. 11, 2014, speaking on condition of anonymity because no announcement had been made.

Associated Press

And the Dodgers also worked to complete a \$48 million, four-year agreement with pitcher Brandon McCarthy.

The Marlins, meanwhile, got pitcher Mat Latos from Cincinnati.

Detroit made a pair of trades, sending pitcher Rick Porcello to Boston for Cespedes and two minor leaguers, and then replenishing its rotation with Simon, obtained from Cincinnati for two minor leaguers. Reds GM Walt Jocketty made that deal in a hotel hallway - Dombrowski's room was right near his.

Boston also worked to finalize a trade with Arizona for

pitcher Wade Miley and a free-agent deal with pitcher Justin Masterson.

"There's obviously been a lot more movement. The pace has quickened, certainly," Red Sox general manager Ben Cherington said. "As expected, it picked up after Lester."

The Cubs also have a \$20 million, two-year deal with right-hander Jason Hamel. And they acquired an All-Star catcher in Montero from Arizona as they try to bring a World Series title to the North Side for the first time since 1908.

On the South Side, the White Sox struck a \$46 million, four-year deal with

closer David Robertson and boosted their rotation by getting Samardzija from Oakland after adding reliever Zach Duke and first baseman Adam LaRoche earlier in the offseason.

Other teams in the Central were adding, too. Minnesota and right-hander Ervin Santana worked to finalize a \$55 million, four-year agreement, and AL champion Kansas City had a \$17 million, two-year deal in place with Kendrys Morales. He figures to take over at designated hitter from Billy Butler, who left as a free agent and agreed to a \$30 million, three-year deal with Oakland.

St. Louis made a deal for free-agent power hitter Mark Reynolds.

Jocketty attributed much of the action to new team bosses.

"I think they wanted to be active and try to do things quickly," he said. □



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NBA Capsules

Warriors streak reaches 14 with win over Rockets

The Associated Press

OAKLAND, California (AP) —

Klay Thompson and Stephen Curry shook off slow starts to finish with a flurry, and the Golden State Warriors extended their franchise-best winning streak to 14 games by beating the Houston Rockets 105-93 on Wednesday night.

Thompson scored 21 points and Curry added 20 points, seven assists and seven rebounds to power an 11-0 run in the final minutes and turn a tight game into another comfortable win. Golden State improved its NBA-best record to 19-2 and helped Steve Kerr become the first rookie coach to win 19 of his first 21 games.

James Harden played through back pain to finish with 34 points and eight rebounds for the Rockets, who had won four straight and seven of eight despite Dwight Howard being sidelined.

Howard (strained right knee) and Warriors center Andrew Bogut (right knee tendinitis) both sat out.

Harrison Barnes finished with 20 points and seven rebounds, and reserve Marreese Speights had 15 points and eight rebounds for the Warriors. Trevor Ariza and Donatas Motiejunas each scored 18 for the Rockets.

HAWKS 95, 76ERS 79

ATLANTA (AP) — Kyle Korver and Paul Millsap each scored 17 points, and Atlanta beat Philadelphia for its eighth straight victory — the Hawks' longest winning streak in 17 years.

Korver sank five 3-pointers as Atlanta (15-6) posted its best streak since an 11-0 start to the 1997-98 season.

DeMarre Carroll had 14 points and 11 rebounds for Atlanta. The Hawks averaged 104 points in their first seven wins of the streak, but relied on defense against Philadelphia.

Alexey Shved had 13 points to lead the 76ers, who have won two of four since their 0-17 start. Luc Mbah a Moute had 12 points, and K.J. McDaniels and Jerami Grant each had 10.

SPURS 109, KNICKS 95

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — Marco

Belinelli scored a season-high 22 points and short-handed San Antonio rolled to victory over the New York Knicks, who lost their 10th straight.

San Antonio, playing without its Big Four, was 10 for 19 on 3-pointers and shot 50 percent overall. The Spurs had seven players in double figures, getting 13 points from Danny Green and 12 from Boris Diaw.

San Antonio was without Tim Duncan, Tony Parker, Manu Ginobili and Kawhi Leonard. Parker (left hamstring) and Leonard (bruised right hand) were injured, but Duncan and Ginobili sat out to rest on the second night of a back-to-back.

Tim Hardaway Jr. scored 23 points on 9-for-18 shooting for the Knicks (4-20). New York was without Carmelo Anthony, who had soreness in his left knee after playing 39 minutes in a loss Tuesday at New Orleans.

HORNETS 96, CELTICS 87

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP) — Al Jefferson had 23 points and 14 rebounds, and Charlotte withstood Boston's fourth-quarter rally to win.

Kemba Walker added 18 points, and Lance Stephenson had 13 for the Hornets, who led by 12 points in the third quarter and were up 87-79 with 8:05 left.

The Celtics — led by Marcus Thornton's 13 fourth-quarter points — pulled to 87-85 with 4:31 remaining. But Walker's three-point play and back-to-back baskets by Jefferson pushed Charlotte's lead to 94-85 with 1:19 left.

Rajon Rondo had a triple-double with 12 points, 10 rebounds and 10 assists for the Celtics. Jeff Green and Thornton led Boston with 16 points each, Tyler Zeller scored 13 and Brandon Bass 10.

Charlotte trailed by five at halftime before opening the third quarter with an 11-4 run. WIZARDS 91, MAGIC 89

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP) — Bradley Beal converted a lob pass at the buzzer to lift Washington over Orlando. John Wall led the Wizards with 21 points and 11 assists, Nene added 12 points, Kris Humphries scored 11, and Marcin Gortat had 10. Washington, which scored the final

seven points, beat Orlando for the seventh straight time. Victor Oladipo had 17 points to lead the Magic. Tobias Harris added 15, Elfrid Payton had 12, and Channing Frye and Kyle O'Quinn added 10 each.

The teams both shot only nine free throws, the first time this season each team had fewer than 10.

The Magic led 89-84 after Harris' dunk with 1:37 left in the game, but couldn't score again.

CLIPPERS 103, PACERS 96

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Jamal Crawford scored 18 points and DeAndre Jordan grabbed a season-high 19 rebounds, helping the Los Angeles Clippers hold off Indiana for their ninth straight win.

Los Angeles (16-5) ended a four-game skid against Indiana.

C.J. Miles scored a season-



Golden State Warriors' Stephen Curry celebrates a score against the Houston Rockets during the second half of an NBA basketball game Wednesday, Dec. 10, 2014, in Oakland, Calif. Associated Press

high 30 points and made six 3-pointers. Lavoy Allen had 14 points for Indiana (7-15), which has lost six straight.

The Pacers made a furious fourth-quarter charge after trailing 82-62 late in the third.

They opened the fourth on a 12-4 spurt, got as close as five, but fell behind 95-87 with less than four minutes left.

Indiana closed to 98-96 on Allen's midrange jumper with 2:00 to play. □

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Panthers' Newton not worried about when he'll play

By **STEVE REED**
AP Sports Writer

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP) -- Cam Newton is not worried about when he'll return to the football field - he said he's just happy to be alive. The Panthers quarterback returned to the team's facility Thursday, two days after a two-car accident left him with two fractures in his lower back. He did not practice and his playing status will be reevaluated next week.

"As far as when I'm coming back, who cares? I'm just thankful to have breath in my lungs," Newton said as he stood behind a podium during a seven-minute press conference.

Newton won't play Sunday against Tampa Bay, Derek Anderson will start at quarterback.

That's fine with Newton, who feels blessed to not have been injured worse - or killed.

"I'm on somebody's fantasy (football) league and I think it's the man upstairs," Newton said.

Newton arrived at the stadium Thursday morning and attended some team meetings, watched film

and began rehabilitation with the training staff. He said his back remains a little stiff, but otherwise feels great.

Newton said he doesn't think the other driver saw him as he pulled out into traffic onto the one-way

how many times his vehicle flipped.

He said the air bags did deploy in his truck.

"The one thing I remember is that I couldn't talk afterward because I was in such shock," Newton said. "In my book one plus one



This is a 2014, file photo showing Cam Newton of the Carolina Panthers NFL football team. Newton has been taken to a hospital after being involved in an auto accident in Charlotte, N.C., Tuesday, Dec. 9, 2014.

street where the quarterback was driving, about a block from the team's stadium.

Newton said the other car clipped the side of his slightly elevated 1998 Dodge truck, causing him to spin and the truck to overturn. Newton said he was conscious for the entire accident, but isn't sure

always equals two. And I'm looking at this truck and this accident and like, dude, one plus one doesn't equal two. I'm like, hey, somebody is supposed to be dead."

Newton said he didn't feel any immediate pain, but as his adrenaline started to wear off his lower back began to tighten.

Newton said he's not sure how long he will be out of action.

He made the decision to come to the stadium to put other people's minds at ease and doesn't want to be a distraction.

"My presence not only helped others but it helped me," Newton said.

Teammates said they were thrilled to see Newton.

Anderson said he gave Newton a "light hug" when he saw him in the training room.

"I think it was an eye-opener for him," Anderson said of the experience.

Panthers coach Ron Rivera said the best-case scenario is Newton could return to action Dec. 21 against Cleveland, but added it will largely be up to the former No. 1 overall pick's pain threshold.

"We'll take it one week at a time," Rivera said.

The Panthers are half-game out of first place in the NFC South despite a 4-8-1 record after a 41-10 victory over New Orleans last Sunday. They could take over control of the division if they beat the Bucs (2-11) and the Saints and

Falcons lose.

Anderson, who is 19-25 as an NFL starter, said he's excited for the opportunity to play in such a big game.

"Obviously the circumstances aren't ideal but I've had a good two days to try get on the same page with everybody," Anderson said.

Anderson said the injury could bring the Panthers closer together as a team as the season winds down. He said it's one of the tightest locker rooms he's been around in during his 10 seasons in the league and the show of love and support for Newton was noticeable.

"Guys genuinely care about his well-being first and foremost," Anderson said. "And those things kind of bring guys together."

Tight end Greg Olsen said Newton was in good spirits as he passed through the locker room.

"I think it's good for him to get back around the guys and get in a normal routine," Olsen said. "It's good to see guys him get back because it means things are getting back to normal." □



Edmonton Oilers' Taylor Hall dives for the puck during the third period of an NHL hockey game against the Anaheim Ducks, Wednesday, Dec. 10, 2014, in Anaheim, Calif. The Ducks won 2-1.

DETROIT (AP) — Toronto's Mike Santorelli scored the

shootout winner as the Maple Leafs won 2-1 at Detroit

NHL Roundup

Santorelli's SO goal lifts Leafs over Red Wings

on Wednesday, preventing the Red Wings building their lead in the NHL Eastern Conference.

Santorelli, the Maple Leafs' third shooter, got the puck past Jimmy Howard to lift Toronto to its third straight win, moving within five points of its Atlantic Division rival.

Tyler Bozak also had a shootout goal for Toronto. Pavel Datsyuk netted the

sole goal for the Red Wings in the tiebreaker.

In regulation, Gustav Nyquist put Detroit ahead in the second period, before Phil Kessel tied the game by tapping in James van Riemsdyk's centering pass. In the day's other game, Anaheim defeated slumping Edmonton 2-1 to go clear top of the Western Conference.

Matt Beleskey scored his

14th goal of the season and Ryan Kesler also netted for the Ducks, who held off a late Edmonton charge, thanks in part to 21 saves by Frederik Andersen.

The Ducks' last 12 victories were by just one goal, and they hung on to that slim lead after Ryan Nugent-Hopkins scored early in the third for Edmonton, which has lost 13 of 14. □

Browns expecting some Manziel magic on Sunday

By TOM WITHERS

AP Sports Writer

BEREA, Ohio (AP) -- Johnny Manziel should come with a warning sticker: Watching can be hazardous to your health.

On Sunday, the NFL will get its first extended look at Manziel, who routinely turned broken plays into touchdowns at Texas A&M and will now try to rescue the Browns' wilting playoff hopes.

As he prepares Manziel for his first career start, Cleveland offensive coordinator Kyle Shanahan said he's not sure what to expect from the cocksure rookie quarterback when he faces the Cincinnati Bengals.

Once Shanahan sends a well-designed play in from the sideline there's no telling what Manziel might do with it after the ball's snapped.

"Everything out here is pretty much scripted and stuff," Shanahan said following Thursday's practice. "I'm waiting. I'm sure it's going to happen pretty fast. We call a pass play, and he's going to do six spins reversing back and forth outside the pocket. I'm going to hold my breath be yelling half the time, and then probably be running and jumping on top of him excited at the end of it."

"Who knows what will happen. I think that's why everyone enjoys watching him, and that's why I'm excited to see what he does. It'll be fun."

The Browns (7-6) need more than entertainment out of Manziel. They need him to take care of the ball, make good decisions and inject some energy into Cleveland's lifeless offense. Manziel may be the 21st quarterback to start for the Browns since 1999, but the team is discarding its sordid history at the position to see what the 22-year-old can do.

Cleveland has tapered its offense to suit Manziel, who came off the bench for deposited starter Brian Hoyer two weeks ago at Buffalo and flashed some of his Johnny Football magic by tucking the ball away, recognizing a lane many quarterbacks wouldn't have seen and darting to the end zone for a 10-yard touchdown run.

With a week to install plays to best use Manziel's arm and legs, the Browns hope to keep the Bengals off balance. But the bigger issue may be getting Manziel to understand that he doesn't have to transform every play into a TV highlight.

Browns coach Mike Pettine doesn't want to put a collar on Manziel, but he doesn't want him running wild. "It's going to be more within the structure of our offense, but at the same time, if you have a guy that has a unique skillset, you don't want to quell that either," he said. "You want to allow him to do it, but you've got to be able to pick and choose your times to do it. On every drop-back pass he cannot look to turn it into a punt return."

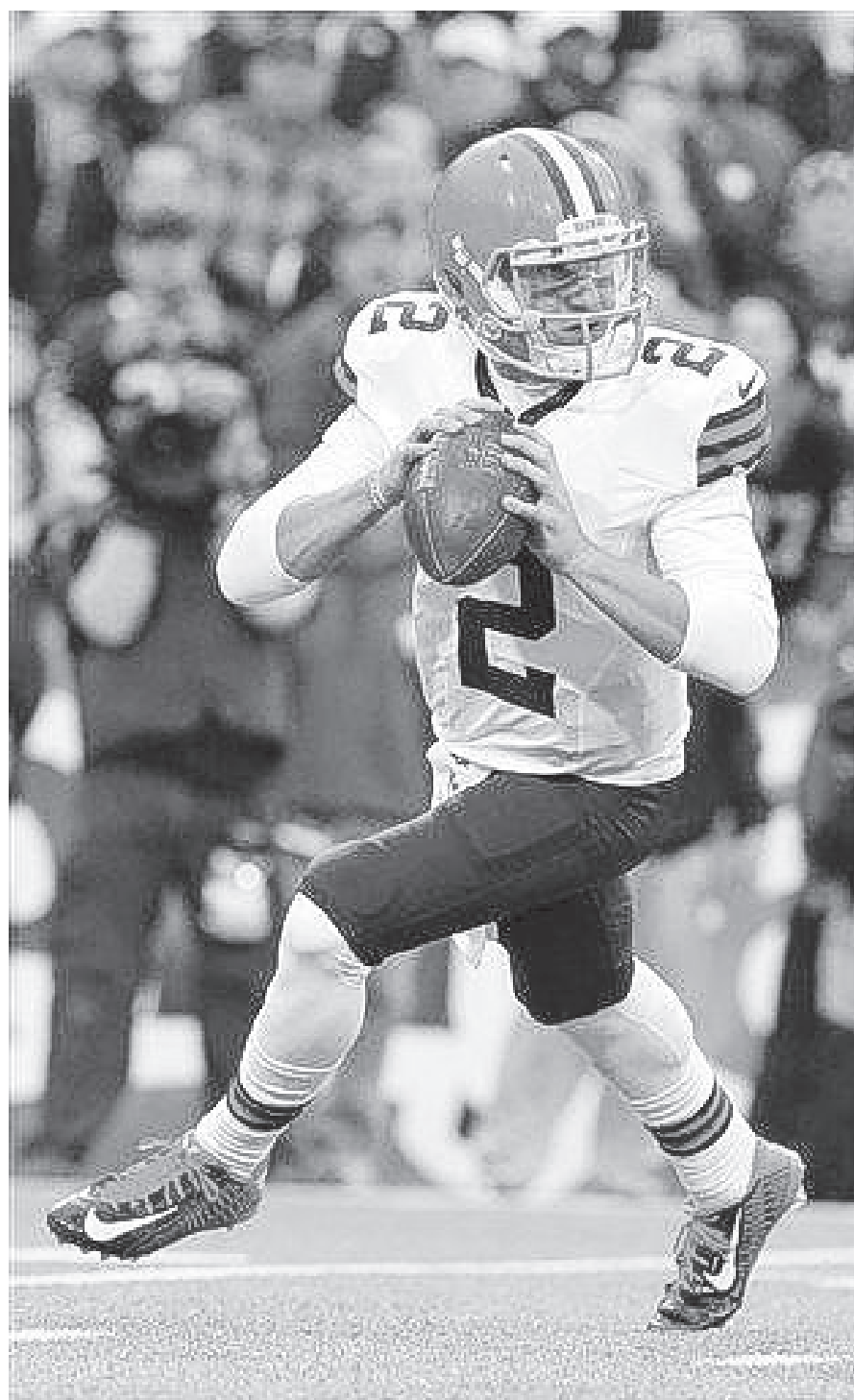
"We just don't want to turn it into, 'Hey, let's run his college offense and let it turn into street ball,' but we also don't want to say, 'Hey listen, here's the playbook. We need to follow this exactly to the letter.' We're not going to do that either."

Shanahan said he has occasionally looks at game tapes of Manziel in college to help him put together plays.

The Browns don't have any allusions that Manziel will be able to run around and do what he did while winning a Heisman Trophy. They're going to let Johnny be Johnny and hope that it's good enough.

"He's tried to develop in every facet, but when that ball snaps, I don't want him thinking about coaching points. I don't want him thinking about how the play is supposed to be. I want him reacting, and hopefully when someone is open, he reacts and lets it rip. Hopefully when someone's not, he reacts and does his deal."

"You just don't want to take that away from him."



In this Nov. 30, 2014, file photo, Cleveland Browns quarterback Johnny Manziel (2) looks to pass against the Buffalo Bills during the second half of an NFL football game in Orchard Park, N.Y. Manziel will make his first NFL start on Sunday, Dec. 14, against Cincinnati, replacing the slumping Brian Hoyer as Cleveland tries to pump life into its sagging playoff hopes.

Associated Press

LeBron James to sit out because of sore left knee

By CLIFF BRUNT

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) --

LeBron James is sitting out the Cleveland Cavaliers' game at Oklahoma City because of a sore left knee.

Cleveland coach David Blatt announced the decision Thursday night during his pregame media session. He said James started to have issues following Cleveland's victory over Toronto on Tuesday night.

"After the last game, he felt some soreness in the back of his knee," Blatt said. "Nothing major."

He got up this morning and didn't feel particularly good, so we decided to hold him out."

James has averaged 24.9 points, 9.0 assists and 4.9 rebounds during Cleveland's eight-game winning streak, helping the Cavaliers climb to the top of the Central Division. He entered the day

fourth in the NBA in scoring at 24.8 points per game and second in minutes at 38 a game. James has played in all 20 of Cleveland's previous games this season. Blatt said it's a day-to-day situation, and there are no plans for an MRI.

"We're monitoring it, and I really don't believe we have any kind of serious situation on our hands, just some soreness and we're being cautious," Blatt said.



Cleveland Cavaliers forward LeBron James warms up before an NBA basketball game against the Brooklyn Nets at the Barclays Center, Monday, Dec. 8, 2014, in New York.

Associated Press

Kevin Harvick named Driver of the Year

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP) -- NASCAR

champion Kevin Harvick has been named Driver of the Year by a panel of broadcasters and journalists.

Harvick won the final two races of the season to earn his first career Sprint Cup title. He won five races in his first season with Stewart-Haas Racing, and it included three in the Chase for the Sprint Cup championship.

Harvick received 13 of the 16 votes cast by motorsports journalists

who vote for just one driver. IndyCar champion Will Power, Nationwide Series champion Chase Elliott and World of Outlaws champion Donny Schatz all received one vote each.

The Driver of the Year award is in its 48th season and encompasses all racing series in the United States. There are 17 journalists eligible to vote. □



Kevin Harvick poses with his championship ring during the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series auto racing awards at Wynn Las Vegas Friday, Dec. 5, 2014, in Las Vegas.

MLS suspends Fabian Espindola for 6 games

NEW YORK (AP) — D.C. United forward Fabian Espindola has been suspended by MLS for six games and fined because he shoved a game official following a playoff game last month.

Espindola missed a header in the 54th minute that would have tied the series that DC lost 3-2 on aggregate despite winning the Nov. 8 game 2-1. After the game, Espindola came into contact with assistant referee George Gansner.

The red card carried a two-game automatic ban, and the MLS disciplinary committee added on four more. Espindola will miss the first six games of the regular season. (Previous versions of this story stated that DC United lost the game 2-1.) □

Ronaldo joins NASL team's owners in Florida

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (AP) — Retired Brazilian superstar Ronaldo has joined the ownership group of the Fort Lauderdale Strikers.

Ronaldo said in a statement by the North American Soccer League team on Thursday that he plans to be "very involved" with the management of the club and hopes to help make the Strikers a "global powerhouse."

The Strikers are named after the original NASL franchise. They play in a new version of the NASL, which is in the second tier of North American pro leagues. □

UCI: Astana case not a return for old doping ways



Italy's Vincenzo Nibali, wearing the overall leader's yellow jersey, passes the Arc de Triomphe during the twenty-first and last stage of the Tour de France cycling race over 137.5 kilometers (85.4 miles) with start in Evry and finish in Paris, France, Sunday, July 27, 2014.

Associated Press

GRAHAM DUNBAR
AP Sports Writer

GENEVA (AP) — The Astana team keeping top-tier status in 2015 does not mean the sport will revert to its old doping ways, according to International Cycling Union President Brian Cookson. Astana, which includes Tour de France winner Vincenzo Nibali, will keep its World Tour license — although on probation — despite five senior and development squad riders being caught doping with EPO and steroids since August.

"It can't carry on, it won't, and it isn't going to," Cookson insisted to the Associated Press in a telephone interview on Thursday.

Still, many cycling commentators and fans called Wednesday's decision a step back, two years after the Lance Armstrong case.

Cookson said the UCI licensing panel imposed strict probation terms, including an audit of the Astana team by a Swiss university which will report in February before the European season starts. The panel also

awaits an Italian prosecutor's file on Astana riders' alleged links to Armstrong's banned doctor, Michele Ferrari.

"This is not the end of the story here," said Cookson, who was not involved in the license panel's ruling. "The team have been given a very short lead and we will be looking at this matter again. New information is coming to light all the time."

Cookson, who was elected in September 2013 with a mandate to reform cycling after the Armstrong era, said he did not know what kind of evidence could come from the Italian Olympic Committee.

"I only know what I have read on the Internet and in the media. We need to see that file," he said, acknowledging frustration at the time the case has taken since the UCI ordered Astana's license reviewed in October.

Astana's triumphant messages posted on its website and Twitter account late Wednesday, ignoring the probation conditions, also left a bad impression.

"I was personally very disappointed to see the team's reaction," Cookson said. "There is certainly nothing to be proud about, and nothing to be pleased about."

Cookson declined to give an opinion on the target of many fans' anger — Astana general manager Alexandre Vinokourov, a former Ferrari client who served a two-year doping ban before winning the 2012 London Olympics road race.

"It's not my place to make a comment about an individual," the UCI leader said, adding that leaders of the Kazakhstan government-backed team and cycling federation "all need to take their responsibility here."

Another positive doping test by a senior rider in 2015 will also trigger a review of the license which guarantees Astana entry to top stage races and one-day classics.

"They won't get a second chance," Cookson said. "They have had too many second chances in the past, perhaps." □

Is rider safety the real Achilles heel for Uber and Lyft?

**BARBARA ORTUTAY
JUSTIN PRITCHARD**
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The growth of ride-hailing companies such as Uber and Lyft so far has not been hindered by limits from government regulators and campaigns by taxi cab competitors. A bigger threat to the new industry's impressive start could come from customers — if enough people stop using the services over fears that drivers aren't safe.

Not safe as in the drivers won't get into an accident — safe as in they won't attack passengers.

Uber operates in more than 250 cities in 50 countries, and recently was valued at \$40 billion based on \$1.2 billion that investors poured into the company in its latest funding round. Lyft, meanwhile, operates in 70 markets in the U.S., up from 30 at the start of the year. So far, controversies have not seemed impact the popularity of ride-hailing apps. They boast several advantages over taxis, including no-cash payments and an app that shows how far away a car is and whether the driver received positive reviews from prior riders. Uber ranks 39th in the Apple iTunes store among the most popular free apps, ahead of Gmail and the music streaming service Pandora. Lyft, which is much smaller, is not in the top 100.

But just this week, California prosecutors sued both, saying they misrepresent and exaggerate the rigor of their background checks. Police in India questioned an Uber executive about its background checks after a driver was accused of raping a passenger. And Uber removed a driver in Chicago after a customer reported she was sexually assaulted during a ride in the city last month. The company said it is cooperating with police in what it called "an appalling and unacceptable incident." This week's incidents follow scattered anecdotes of previous assaults by Uber drivers. They don't prove

the services are unsafe alternatives to traditional taxis. But they do present a challenge if riders begin to think they reflect a systemic disregard for passenger safety.

Jeff Brewer, pastor at a

having to transport people," he said. "Uber's work isn't done once the taxi is hailed on their app. That's when all the problems begin."

On its website, Uber says its drivers are "screened

against "federal, multi-state and county criminal background checks spanning the past seven years." The company expects to complete more than 2 million checks this year, according to spokesman

not as rigorous as they sound. Unlike with regulated taxis in San Francisco and Los Angeles, Uber's background checks do not require drivers be fingerprinted.

Hirease, the company that performs Uber's background checks, instead relies on "personal identifiers," such as license numbers and Social Security numbers are supplied by the applicants. As such, the lawsuit says, there is no way to ensure that the applicants are who they say they are.

As part of a settlement of a similar lawsuit, Uber rival Lyft agreed to drop claims that its background checks are the "best available" and the "gold standard."

Lyft spokeswoman Erin Simpson said in an emailed statement that the company has "pioneered strict safety screening criteria that far exceed what's required for taxis and limos in nearly every municipality across the country."

Regulators at the California Public Utilities Commission are revisiting ride-hailing company rules they put in place last year. □



This Friday, Nov. 21, 2014 file photo taken in Newark, N.J., shows smartphones displaying Uber car availability in New York.
Associated Press

church in the Chicago suburbs, wouldn't step into an Uber car. Though he likes the convenience Uber would bring, he sticks with taxis on trips into the city.

"Whether it's right or wrong, there's at least some sort of perception that there's a company that has vetted the person," he said.

As with airlines, if passenger safety becomes an ongoing issue with Uber rather than isolated incidents, it could face long-term consequences, said Alex Stanton, a crisis management and communications specialist.

"At some level, there is a point at which safety does trump convenience," Stanton said.

The safety and regulatory issues "absolutely" affect Uber's valuation, said Sam Hamadeh, CEO of research firm PrivCo. Unlike, say Twitter and WhatsApp, Uber is not a "nice, clean technology company, the type that venture capitalists in Silicon Valley usually invest in — which is software, Web apps" and so on, he said.

"Here you are talking about actually, physically

through a rigorous process we've developed using constantly improving standards." In a written statement, Uber added that it screens would-be drivers

Lane Kasselmann.

But California prosecutors, who filed lawsuits against Uber in San Francisco Superior Court, say the company's safety checks are

Web inventor says Internet should be 'human right'

SYLVIA HUI
Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — The computer scientist credited with inventing the World Wide Web says affordable access to the Internet should be recognized as a human right, as a report showed that billions of people still cannot go online and government surveillance and censorship are increasing.

Tim Berners-Lee said Thursday the Internet can help tackle inequality — but only if it comes with the rights to privacy and freedom of expression. The Briton, who launched the Web in 1990, made the remarks as he released his World Wide Web Foundation's latest report track-

ing the Internet's global impact.

The Web Index found that laws preventing mass online surveillance are weak or nonexistent in more than 84 percent of countries. It also said that almost 40 percent of surveyed countries were blocking sensitive online content to a "moderate or extreme degree," and that half of all Web users live in countries that severely restrict their rights online.

Almost 4.4 billion people — most of them in developing countries — still have no access to the Internet, the Web Index said. "It's time to recognize the Internet as a basic human right," Berners-

Lee said. "That means guaranteeing affordable access for all, ensuring Internet packets are delivered without commercial or political discrimination, and protecting the privacy and freedom of Web users regardless of where they live."

Denmark, Finland, and Norway were ranked as top overall, meaning they were best at using the Internet for economic, political and social progress. At the bottom of a list of 86 countries were Yemen, Myanmar and Ethiopia. Berners-Lee was working an engineer at the CERN laboratory in Geneva when he proposed the idea of a World Wide Web in 1989. □



This photo shows a RadioShack store sign in Philadelphia. RadioShack's third-quarter loss widened, sales dropped for the 11th consecutive quarter and the electronics retailer detailed its cost-cutting plans to help it stay afloat, Thursday, Dec. 11, 2014. (AP Photo/Matt Rourke)

RadioShack cuts costs as quarterly losses expand

MICHELLE CHAPMAN
AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — RadioShack's troubles continue to mount as it spars with lenders and its losses grow. While the electronics company doesn't plan on going down without a fight — detailing its latest round of cost-cutting — its CEO said there's no assurance it can put into place a long-term solution to stay afloat. The company reported widening losses and a decline in sales for the 11th consecutive quarter on Thursday.

RadioShack, the ubiquitous seller of batteries and obscure electronic parts, has tried to find its way as online competition has grown fiercer. The Fort Worth, Texas company's explosive growth exacerbated those problems and it has become a central issue in its fight with lenders as it tries to close hundreds of locations.

RadioShack said in March that it planned to close up to 1,100 U.S. stores, trimming the total to just over 4,000. But it backed away from that aggressive plan two months later under pressure from lenders and vowed to find other ways to cut costs, including more limited store closings. That fight is ongoing.

Last week, Salus Capital Partners claimed that RadioShack had breached covenants on a \$250 million term loan and asked the company to prepay some of its debt, along with other fees. RadioShack disputed the claim, calling it

"wrong and self-serving."

CEO Joseph Magnacca said specifically Thursday that the company continues to face challenges from its term loan lenders, but that it has been backed by revolving credit lenders.

The chain is working with those lenders to close additional stores, sticking to its goal of 1,100, but Magnacca laid out other cost-cutting plans Thursday that would buy the company time and hopefully drive growth.

"For RadioShack to succeed, we need to first right size our cost structure," he said.

To that end, Magnacca said Thursday that RadioShack would boost earnings by more than \$400 million annually by changing store hours and staffing, altering overtime practices and cutting the number of its field managers by 50 percent.

Magnacca said RadioShack has already lowered its headcount through attrition and through other departmental realignments to save \$7.3 million annually. New staffing reductions will save an additional \$18 million in early January and total reductions in its work force are expected to lower corporate costs by more than 30 percent.

But RadioShack doesn't have a lot of time to turn things around. In September the company warned that it might need to file for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection. □

Retail sales boost Wall Street

KEN SWEET
AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Good news on U.S. retail sales lifted the stock market Thursday, although worries about the latest plunge in oil prices kept the gains in check.

Investors are caught between two conflicting thoughts: the improving U.S. economy, lower energy costs and higher consumer spending are expected to boost profits for many companies. But the recent drop in oil prices, which has accelerated in recent days, has investors worried that earnings for energy companies will suffer.

The drop in the price of oil has been a significant reason why stocks on pace to post their first weekly loss in nearly two months.

"Here on one hand the U.S. economy is doing very well. You can see it today in the retail sales numbers.

ite rose 24.14 points, or 0.5 percent, to 4,708.16.

Companies that rely the most on spending by consumers rose the most Thursday. The S&P 500 consumer discretionary sector, a category that includes department stores and other retailers, gained 0.7 percent, while makers of consumer staples increased 0.8 percent.

Urban Outfitters, GameStop, Coach, Best Buy and Macy's were among the biggest gainers.

The rise came after the Commerce Department said U.S. retail sales rose by 0.7 percent in November. The encouraging retail sales report could not have come at a more crucial time for retailers, since holiday sales often mean the difference between retail companies reporting a profit or a loss for the year. Falling gasoline prices led to a decline of 0.8 percent in sales at gas stations, but

\$59.95 a barrel, its first time below \$60 a barrel in more than five years. That's on top of steep plunges of \$2.88 a barrel on Wednesday and \$2.79 a barrel Monday. It's down sharply from its recent high of \$107 a barrel in June.

Earlier in the day, oil prices seemed to be holding steady above that \$60 mark, which in turn helped keep energy stocks higher. But oil could not keep up the momentum, and slid in afternoon trading.

"Once oil broke \$60 a barrel, the market followed," said Jonathan Corpina, a trader at Meridian Equity Partners.

While lower oil prices are good for consumers, many energy companies rely on high oil prices to justify drilling in remote parts of the globe for hard-to-reach reserves of crude. Energy companies also make up a big part of the U.S. stock market. Oil drillers and drill-



Trader Gregory Rowe works on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange Thursday, Dec. 11, 2014. A strong report on retail sales pushed U.S. stocks higher in early trading Thursday, easing investors' jitters over the global economy and another slide in oil prices.

(AP Photo/Richard Drew)

But the global economy isn't doing well, which is why oil prices are dropping," said Russ Koesterich, global chief investment strategist at Blackrock.

The Dow Jones industrial average rose 63.19 points, or 0.4 percent, to 17,596.34. It was up 225 points earlier. The Standard & Poor's 500 index rose 9.19 points, or 0.5 percent, to 2,035.33 and the Nasdaq compos-

that money was likely spent elsewhere, investors said.

"(Lower oil prices) are a very big tax cut for U.S. consumers," Koesterich said. "Middle-income families are spending what they would spend on gas on other parts of the economy."

Another downturn in the price of oil discouraged buyers.

Oil fell 99 cents to close at

ing equipment suppliers were among the biggest decliners. Nabors Industries fell 34 cents, or 3 percent, to \$10.51. Transocean lost 37 cents, or 2 percent, to \$17.02. Chesapeake Energy fell 43 cents, or 2.5 percent, to \$16.71.

With the decline in oil, the S&P 500's energy component is down 7 percent this week alone. It's down 13 percent for the year. □

Old Journalism and New



ROSS DOUTHAT
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Sometimes media events synchronize almost too neatly. Last weekend, the entity known as Vox Media, whose array of properties includes this year's big liberal-journalism startup, Vox.com, announced that its latest round of investment had raised the company's valuation to a robust \$380 million.

Then on Thursday last week, The New Republic, a storied liberal magazine that's emphatically not worth \$380 million, saw its editor-in-chief and literary editor sacked by a pair of figures out of a Silicon Valley satire - a tech almost-billionaire, Chris Hughes, who won the meritocracy's equivalent of the lottery when he roomed with Mark Zuckerberg at Harvard, and Hughes' digital guru, Guy Vidra, whose plan for vertical integration with the Singularity can now proceed apace.

Mass resignations followed; eulogies were penned for the TNR-that-was. (And, admittedly, that hadn't really existed for some time.) But the most interesting in memoriam came from Ezra Klein, Vox.com's editor-in-chief, because he wrote as a spokesman for a new model of political journalism pronouncing a parting benediction on the old one. "The eulogy that needs to be written," Klein argued, is actually for an entire kind of publication - the "ambitious policy magazine," whether on the left or right, that once set the terms of Washington's debates.

With the emergence of the Internet, those magazines lost their monopolies, and the debate "spilled online, beyond their pages, outside their borders," with both new competitors and specific voices (Klein kindly cites my own) becoming more important than before.

As Klein correctly implies, this shift has produced a deeper policy conversation than print journalism ever sustained. Indeed, the oceans of space online, the easy availability of studies and reports, the ability to go endless rounds on topics - plus the willingness of many experts to blog and bicker for the sheer fun of it! - has made the Internet era a golden age for technocratic argument and data-driven debate.

But there is a price to be paid as well. That price, Klein suggests, is the loss of the older magazines' ability to be idiosyncratic and nonpandering and just tell their readers what they should care about, because more than ever before you need to care about what readers click on first (like the latest John Oliver SMACK-DOWN, in the case of Vox) to

get the traffic that pays for the ads that subsidize a seven-part argument about health care costs.

So as much as the new landscape has to offer, Klein concludes, "something is being lost in the transition from policy magazines to policy websites, and it's still an open question how much of it can be regained."

All of this is sensible and true. But there's one large amendment that needs to be offered. The New Republic as-it-was, the magazine I and others grew up reading, was emphatically not just a "policy magazine." It was, instead, a publication that deliberately integrated its policy writing with often-extraordinary coverage of literature, philosophy, history, religion, music, fine art. It wasn't just a liberal magazine, in other words; it was a liberal-arts magazine, which unlike many of today's online ventures never left its readers with the delusion that literary style or intellectual ambition were of secondary importance, or that today's fashions represented permanent truths.

Unlike our era's ascendant data journalism, it also never implied that technocracy was somehow a self-sustaining proposition, or that a utilitarianism of policy inputs and social outcomes suffices to understand every area of life. (And unlike many liberal outlets, in its finest years it published, employed and even occasionally was edited by people on the right of center - something some of us particularly appreciated.) So when we talk about what's being lost in the transition from old to new, print to digital, it's this larger, humanistic realm that needs attention. It isn't just policy writing that's thriving online; it's anything that's immediate, analytical, data-driven - from election coverage to pop culture obsessiveness to rigorous analysis of baseball's trade market. Like most readers, I devour this material. Like most journalists, I write some of it. I'm grateful that the outlets that produce it all exist.

But among publications old and new and reinvented, it's also hard not to notice that John Oliver videos - or, more broadly, the array of food and sports and gadget sites that surround Klein's enterprise at Vox Media - aren't just paying for the policy analysis. They're actively displacing other kinds of cultural coverage and interaction, in which the glibness of the everyday is challenged by ideas and forms older than a startup, more subtle than a TV recap, more rigorous than a comedian's monologue.

And since today's liberalism is particularly enamored of arc-of-history arguments that either condemn or implicitly whisk away the past, this may be a particular problem for the Internet-era progressive mind.

The peril isn't just that blithe dot-com philistines will tear down institutions that once sustained a liberal humanism. It's that those institutions' successors won't even recognize what's lost. □



How the IS Drives Muslims From Islam



THOMAS L. FRIEDMAN
© 2014 New York Times

The Islamic State has visibly attracted young Muslims from all over the world to its violent movement to build a caliphate in Iraq and Syria. But here's what's less visible - the online backlash against the Islamic State, also known as ISIS and ISIL, by young Muslims declaring their opposition to rule by Islamic law, or Shariah, and even proudly avowing their atheism. Nadia Oweidat, a senior fellow at the New America Foundation, who tracks how Arab youths use the Internet, says the phenomenon "is mushrooming - the brutality of the Islamic State is exacerbating the issue and even pushing some young Muslims away from Islam."

On Nov. 24, BBC.com published a piece on what was trending on Twitter. It began: "A growing social media conversation in Arabic is calling for the implementation of Shariah, or Islamic law, to be abandoned. Discussing religious law is a sensitive topic in many Muslim countries. But on Twitter, a hashtag which translates as 'why we reject implementing Shariah' has been used 5,000 times in 24 hours. The conversation is mainly taking place in Saudi Arabia and Egypt. The debate is about whether religious law is suitable for the needs of Arab countries and modern legal systems. Dr. Alyaa Gad, an Egyptian doctor living in Switzerland, started the hashtag. 'I have nothing against religion,' she tells BBC Trending, but says she is against 'using it as a political system.'"

The BBC added that "many others joined in the conversation, using the hashtag, listing reasons

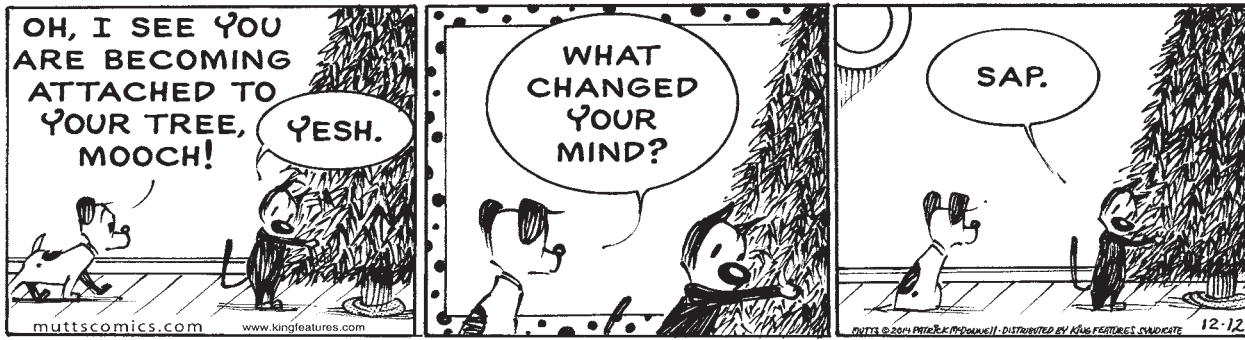
why Arabs and Muslims should abandon Shariah. 'Because there's not a single positive example of it bringing justice and equality,' one man tweeted. ... A Saudi woman commented: 'By adhering to Shariah we are adhering to inhumane laws. Saudi Arabia is saturated with the blood of those executed by Shariah.'" Ismail Mohamed, an Egyptian on a mission to create freedom of conscience there, started a program called "Black Ducks" to offer a space where agnostic and atheist Arabs can speak freely about their right to choose what they believe and resist coercion and misogyny from religious authorities. He is part of a growing Arab Atheists Network. For Arab news written by Arabs that gets right in the face of autocrats and religious extremists also check out free-arabs.com. Another voice getting attention is Brother Rachid, a Moroccan who created his own YouTube network to deliver his message of tolerance and to expose examples of intolerance within his former Muslim faith community. (He told me he's converted to Christianity, preferring its "God of love.") In this recent segment, youtube.com/watch?v=QxzOVSMUrGM, which has been viewed 500,000 times, Brother Rachid addressed President Barack Obama: "Dear Mr. President, I must tell you that you are wrong about ISIL. You said ISIL speaks for no religion. I am a former Muslim. My dad is an imam. I have spent more than 20 years studying Islam. ... I can tell you with confidence that ISIL speaks for Islam. ... ISIL's 10,000 members are all Muslims. ... They come from different countries and have one common denominator: Islam. They are following Islam's Prophet Muhammad in every detail. ... They have called for a caliphate, which is a central doctrine in Sunni Islam."

He continued: "I ask you, Mr. President, to stop being politically correct - to call things by their names. ISIL, al-Qaida, Boko Haram, al-Shabab in Somalia, the Taliban, and their sister

brand names, are all made in Islam. Unless the Muslim world deals with Islam and separates religion from state, we will never end this cycle. ... If Islam is not the problem, then why is it there are millions of Christians in the Middle East and yet none of them has ever blown up himself to become a martyr, even though they live under the same economic and political circumstances and even worse? . Mr. President, if you really want to fight terrorism, then fight it at the roots. How many Saudi sheiks are preaching hatred? How many Islamic channels are indoctrinating people and teaching them violence from the Quran and the hadith? ... How many Islamic schools are producing generations of teachers and students who believe in jihad and martyrdom and fighting the infidels?" The Islamic State, by claiming to speak for all Muslims - and by promoting a puritanical form of Islam that takes present-day, Saudi-funded, madrassa indoctrination to its logical political conclusion - has blown the lid off some long simmering frustrations in the Arab Muslim world.

As an outsider, I can't say how widespread this is. But clearly there is a significant group of Muslims who feel that their government-backed preachers and religious hierarchies have handed them a brand of Islam that does not speak to them. These same authorities have also denied them the critical thinking tools and religious space to imagine new interpretations. So a few, like Brother Rachid, leave Islam for a different faith and invite others to come along. And some seem to be quietly detaching from religion entirely - fed up with being patronized by politically correct Westerners telling them what Islam is not and with being tyrannized by self-appointed Islamist authoritarians telling them what Islam is. Now that the Internet has created free, safe, alternative spaces and platforms to discuss these issues, outside the mosques and government-owned media, this war of ideas is on. □

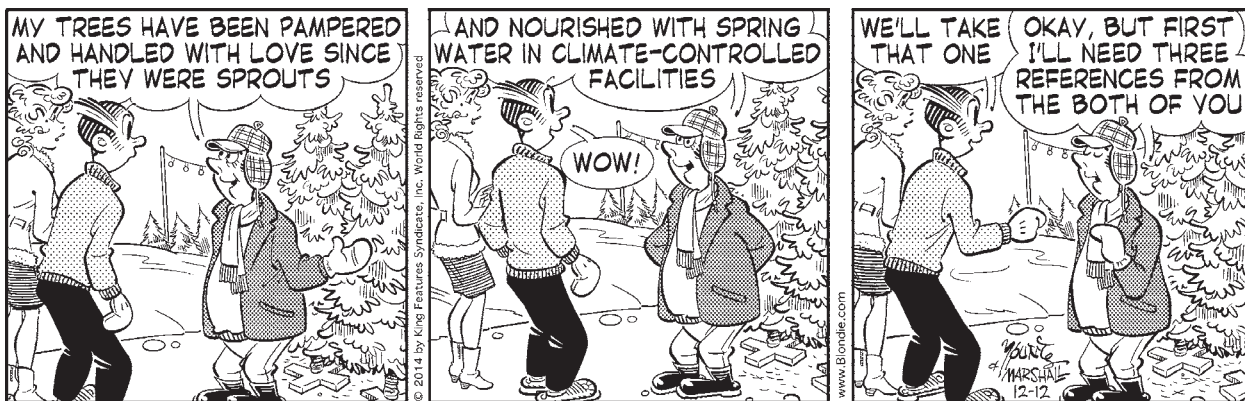
Mutts



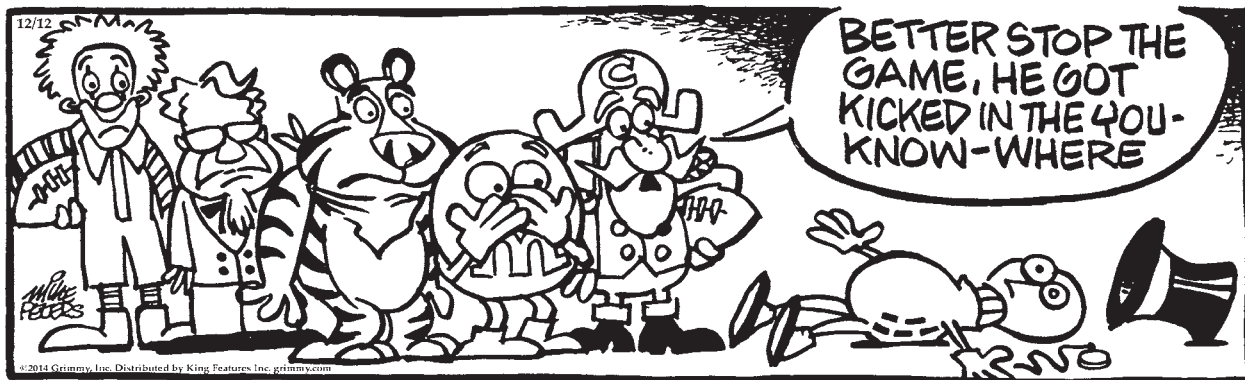
6 Chix



Blondie



Mother Goose & Grimm



Baby Blues



Zits



Conceptis Sudoku

4			1					3
	1		8				6	
	3			7			9	
							4	1
		8				7		
5	2							
	4			3			8	
	6				2		1	
2					9			5

Difficulty Level ★★★★★

12/12

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

Yesterday's puzzle answer

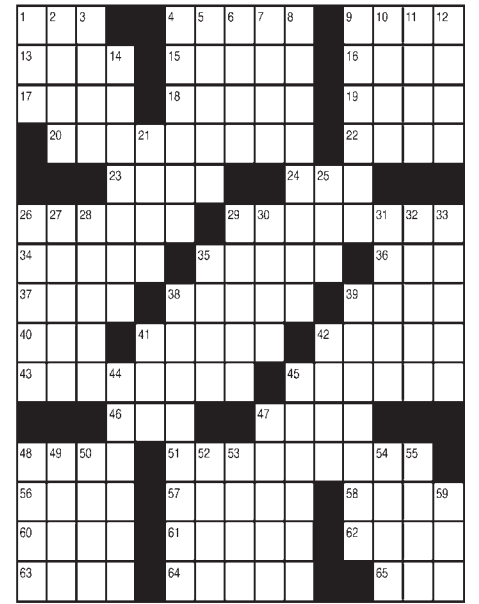
5	1	6	4	3	8	7	9	2
3	4	9	7	5	2	8	1	6
2	7	8	1	9	6	4	5	3
4	3	5	6	2	7	9	8	1
6	2	7	8	1	9	3	4	5
8	9	1	3	4	5	6	2	7
1	8	3	5	6	4	2	7	9
7	5	2	9	8	3	1	6	4
9	6	4	2	7	1	5	3	8

ACROSS

- ABC followers
- Ice cream portion
- "Break ___!"; well-wisher's cry to an actor
- Way out
- Treasure cache
- Fib teller
- Give a hoot
- Levels to the ground
- Puncture
- Delight
- "___ the Lonely"; Roy Orbison hit
- Tears
- Corn serving
- Wine container
- Screched
- Wonderland visitor
- More devious
- ___ of these days; eventually
- Femur or tibia
- Prize
- Facts & figures
- ___jet printers
- Ridiculous
- Hayes or Hunt
- Baby bird
- Stringed instruments
- Shade tree
- Daddy
- ___Cola
- ___ of guilt; owning up
- Garden of Eden resident
- Adolescents
- Reclines
- Theater box
- Fill with joy
- Strike with an open hand
- Dancer Astaire
- Grain storage towers
- Pig's home

DOWN

- Last calendar page; abbr.
- Test



Created by Jacqueline E. Mathews

12/12/14

Thursday's Puzzle Solved

BLAB	FJORD	THAN
ROME	LUNAR	RISE
ABED	ADAGE	IRKS
DESTINY	GABFEST	
	INK	PEDAL
AROMA	PAD	SEALS
DOME	FAR	MISHAP
AYE	MARTIAN	ERR
MAGGOT	AVE	JAVA
SLAYS	SKY	TODAY
	MELEE	MOB
BRONSON	BATHTUB	
LAVA	CABIN	URGE
ICES	ATOLLY	NILE
PENT	LEAKY	TOYS

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12/12/14

- Blaze
- One of 13 on our flag
- Stuffs
- Trickle out
- Kiln
- Annoyed
- Clinton's VP
- Roaring beast
- Actor James Jones
- Writer Zane
- Balcony
- Plentiful
- Broadcast
- Forest home
- Without companions
- Skating ovals
- Street talk
- Take on employees
- Eucalyptus leaf-eating marsupial
- Go in
- College officials
- Waterbird
- Enlivens

- Particulars
- Sick
- Joints nearest the waist
- ___ up; joined forces
- Talks back to
- Blotchy horse
- Young cow
- Smell
- Canary's home
- Sandwich shop
- Breakfast or supper
- Kinkade's paintings
- ___ as a pin
- Secret agent

Kerry to climate talks: No excuse for inaction

KARL RITTER
MATTHEW LEE
Associated Press

LIMA, Peru (AP) — Secretary of State John Kerry on Thursday tried to spur slow-moving U.N. climate talks, telling governments to stop blaming each other for global warming and urg-

give us," Kerry said. "We must take giant measurable clear steps forward that will put us on a new path." He also took a swipe at U.S. politicians who continue to deny the assessment by an overwhelming majority of scientists that climate change is man-made,

ment that is supposed to be adopted a year from now in Paris. The optimism injected into the negotiations last month by a joint U.S.-China announcement on their planned efforts to limit emissions has faded during the two-week session as age-old splits between rich and poor countries re-emerged over who should do what. Some delegates said they were surprised that China continued to take a tough stance on keeping clear dividing lines between the climate action expected from developed and developing nations.

"I thought that they would not be as stern as they used to be in the past," said Tony de Brum, the foreign minister of the Marshall Islands, which is among the small island states that fear they will be submerged by rising seas caused by global warming.

Since his days in the U.S. Senate, Kerry has attended every major climate change conference since the 1992 Rio Earth Summit that was the first of now 20 rounds of U.N. talks and he has made action a personal priority. □



United States Secretary of State John Kerry delivers a speech at the U.N. Climate Change Conference in Lima, Peru, Thursday, Dec. 11, 2014. Kerry is in Lima along with delegates from more than 190 countries meeting to work on drafts for a global climate deal that is supposed to be adopted next year in Paris. (AP Photo/Rodrigo Abd)

ing developing countries to not take the cheap route of high-polluting coal to grow their economies. In a speech in Lima, Kerry said neglecting to mount a collective response to fight climate change would be judged as a "moral failure of historical consequences."

"If we don't lead, future generations will not for-

mainly caused by emissions from burning fossil fuels.

"You don't need a Ph.D. to see that the world is already changing," Kerry said.

Negotiators in Lima are trying to define the elements of a global climate agree-

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24/7

Humpback whales increasing in waters near NYC

JIM FITZGERALD
Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Humpback whales, the gigantic, endangered mammals known for their haunting underwater songs, have been approaching New York City in greater numbers than even old sea captains can remember.

Naturalists aboard whale-watching boats have seen humpbacks in the Atlantic Ocean within a mile of the Rockaway peninsula, part of New York's borough of Queens, within sight of Manhattan's skyscrapers.

"It is truly remarkable, within miles of the Empire State Building, to have one of the largest and most charismatic species ever to be on this planet," said Howard Rosenbaum, director of the Ocean Giants program at the Wildlife Conservation Society.

Humpbacks were spotted 87 times from the boats this year, and by cataloging the whales' markings, at least 19 different humpbacks have been identified in the waters off the city.

Paul Sieswerda, founder of Gotham Whale, which documents the marine mammal population around New York, said reports of humpbacks in the New York Bight, where the city's harbor meets the Atlantic, began to pick up around 2010 from surprised fishermen and other veterans on the water. Gotham Whale then partnered with the American Princess whale-watching boat, providing naturalists who could document the sightings.

The naturalists also do an educational presentation on the boat and answer customers' questions, said Tom Paladino, the boat's captain.

"It was pretty slim pickings at first, actually," Sieswerda said. "We went on many cruises and had three sightings totaling five whales in 2011."

But in 2012, there were 15 sightings; in 2013, 33; and this year there were 87 sightings totaling

106 humpbacks.

Many whales were sighted more than once. But by comparing flukes — the distinctive shapes and markings of their tails — 19 different humpbacks have been documented near the city so far. Customers on the whale-watch-

whale species were nearly destroyed by whaling.

Rosenbaum said the humpbacks' reappearance could be simply a shift in their habits rather than a spike in population. A greater abundance of menhaden, one of the humpbacks' fa-

ward the natural environment."

New Yorkers shouldn't expect to see humpbacks frolicking around the Statue of Liberty, though. Except for the occasional disoriented calf, the whales generally stay well outside the harbor, beyond the "gate" formed by the



In this June 2014 photo provided by Gotham Whale, a humpback whale breaks through the surface of the Atlantic Ocean just off a beach on the Rockaway peninsula near New York City.

Associated Press

ing tours are asked to share any photos they get of such markings for the "New York City Humpback Whale Catalog."

"This is the way they've been doing it in Maine and Massachusetts, the recognized way to keep track of these whales, study their behavior," Sieswerda said.

It's not crystal clear why humpbacks, which can be 50 feet (15 meters) long and weigh 40 tons, are returning to New York's shores, where they were abundant before they and other

favorite foods, could have attracted them from farther out in the ocean.

That might be because the water is cleaner.

"One would like to think that some of this has been triggered by an improved environmental ethic," Rosenbaum said. "We have the clean air and clean water acts, the Marine Mammal Protection Act and associated state laws. It's hard to make the link for sure but there's certainly been a behavioral change to-

Rockaway peninsula in New York and Sandy Hook in New Jersey.

Rosenbaum worries that more whales could mean problems in the busy shipping lanes out of New York. And he hopes they'll be taken into consideration when offshore wind-power projects are suggested. But he says, "Having them here is truly remarkable and encouraging. I think it will help people in New York embrace the natural world and the marine environment and these iconic species." □

'Killer Heels' looks at the history of high heels

KEVIN BEGOS
Associated Press

Shakespeare mentions high heels in "Hamlet," former New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg praised them and fashion designers from Dior to Manolo Blahnik have bewitched women and men with their versions. "Killer Heels" is a luxurious, fun and sexy look at the history of high heels, and it manages to be eye candy and thought-provoking, too. It's on shelves for the holiday shopping season.

Based on an exhibit at the Brooklyn Museum, the book contains several essays and more than 100 luxurious illustrations that trace the history of heels from ancient Greece and Turkey to the modern streets of New York and Paris. Greek actors used thick-soled cork shoes for greater visibility onstage, and during the Ottoman Empire women used a type of clog for slick bathhouse floors. That supposedly inspired the chopine of 16th-century Venice, and one delicately embroidered pair from that era shown in the book could still attract attention at a party today. The book is dominated by pictures of heels from the last 100 years, and designer Pierre Hardy notes a common theme there: "People love a high heel because it is not natural. It is a cultural object connected with seduction, power, and sexuality."

A pair of Salvatore Ferragamo heels from 1938 is like a happy, colored layer cake for feet, while the Rapaport Brothers' Satel-



This photo provided by Del-Monico Books - Prestel shows the cover of the book, "Killer Heels, The Art of the High-Heeled Shoe, edited by Lisa Small.

Associated Press

lite Jumping Shoes from 1955 has a pair of springs, presumably to launch the wearer even higher. There are kinky red leather, thigh-high boots with heels from Paris in the 1920s and the untitled nude "Gaga Shoe" from 2012 that has tiny men clambering up the sides of the shoes.

The images are interspersed with interesting bits of history: According to legend, the men of Louis the XIV's court used the talon rouge heel as a status symbol, and the trend began when a partying group of noblemen had the heels of their silk shoes stained red from bloody streets near slaughterhouses. But Napoleon and Josephine later frowned on the implied message of higher status from high heels and chose flat-bottom shoes for their official look.

Many of the modern examples are a mix of fashion, art and architecture. Iris van Herpen's "Beyond Wilderness" is constructed to look like a black mass of twisted roots, while Roger Vivier's "Blue Feather Choc" is wildly elegant.

"Killer Heels" is bound to please any fashionista, but men who take a peek may also find the answer to an old question: The book definitively explains why women need so many shoes.

Director Ava DuVernay makes history with Globes nod

SANDY COHEN

AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Ava DuVernay hasn't had time to consider how she's made history.

With her nomination Thursday for "Selma," the 42-year-old became the first black woman on the short list for a Golden Globe director's prize.

"I just turned in the film four weeks ago and now we've got nominations," DuVernay said by phone from Toronto. "I haven't had a real second to sit down and really think about it."

"Selma" tells the story of Martin Luther King Jr. and his colleagues as they planned marches from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama, to demand voting rights in 1965. It opens in theaters on Christmas.

The civil rights drama earned four nominations in all, including best actor for star David Oyelowo, best original song for Common and John Legend's "Glorious," and best picture.

DuVernay and Oyelowo said they'll celebrate by



In this image released by Paramount Pictures, director Ava DuVernay appears on the set during the filming of "Selma."

Associated Press

taking a planned trip to Washington, D.C., to show the film to members of Congress and present a special honor to Rep. John Lewis, D-Georgia, who is depicted in "Selma."

Next month's Golden Globes ceremony won't be the first for DuVernay. She worked as a publicist for a dozen years before becoming a filmmaker and ushered many clients through Hollywood's awards circuit.

"I remember standing on

the side in my black suit when we had so many nominations for 'Dreamgirls,' which I was a publicist on. Then you make sure that your people get through to backstage and get to the party," she said. "And to think that this year I'll be at the party with a seat in an actual chair instead of standing on the side, it's going to be thrilling. I'm the one that stands on the side and supports the artist, and this time I'm the artist."q

Wahlberg acknowledges varied opinions about pardon

ALICIA RANCILIO
Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Since it was revealed Mark Wahlberg is seeking a pardon in Massachusetts for assaults he committed as a teen, the actor is well aware that the court of public opinion has weighed in on why he wants one and whether he deserves it.

"Everyone has an opinion and has a reason why they think I'm doing it," said the actor Wednesday at the New York premiere of his new movie "The Gambler," opening Dec. 25.

"I've been working very hard to correct a lot of mistakes that I made since the day that I woke up and realized, 'You know what? I need to be a leader instead of a follower,'" he said.

A document was filed Nov. 26 requesting the pardon. It states in 1988, when Wahlberg was 16, he hit a man in the head with a wooden stick while trying to steal two cases of alcohol in front of a convenience store near his family's home in the Dorchester section of Boston. He punched another man in the face while trying to avoid police. Wahlberg admits in the application that he was high on marijuana and narcotics at the time.

He ended up being convicted as an adult of assault and other charges, and he was sentenced to three months in jail. He said he was released after serving about 45 days.

Wahlberg, 43, who went on to be a rapper and then A-list actor who's been nomi-



Mark Wahlberg attends "The Gambler" premiere on Wednesday, Dec. 10, 2014, in New York.

Associated Press

nated for an Oscar, said he isn't trying to use his public persona to sway the decision.



Show-runners on rise as TV Twitter celebrities

ALICIA RANCILIO
Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — When a new episode of ABC Family's "Pretty Little Liars" airs, its show-runner, I. Marlene King, makes a point to go on Twitter to see what the fans have to say.

King is among the newest class of TV celebrities on social media: Show-runners who are both gaining in followers and who find that social media gives back perhaps even more than they put in.

"I pay enormous attention to it," King said. "I am on social media live every night when the show airs and the next day as well looking at the feedback we got regarding the episode. Yes, I have vision for the show and a creative destination where I know the show is going, but I would be foolish not to take advantage of this wonderful, giant focus group of millions of people we have each week when the show airs." A show-runner is typically the executive producer of a TV show, with the most creative control. King said social media has helped validate her decisions about the fate of certain characters on "PLL".

"I started falling in love with the character of Toby early on in the show," she



In this 2013 photo provided by MTV Networks, Jeff Davis, center right, and Arden Cho block out a fight scene for "Teen Wolf's Season 3 Finale." TV showrunners and the people behind-the-scenes of popular TV shows are becoming famous in their own right.

Associated Press

said. "We were going to follow the books and have his character die early on, but as I started to fall in love with him I noticed fans were really falling in love with him, and together as the show and the fans we decided to keep him."

Show-runner Hart Hanson ("Bones," Fox) pays attention to what the fans are saying online but makes the point that not all of his viewers are using social media.

"The entire audience is not represented by the Twitter

follower, especially the verbose and noisy Twitter follower," he said. "If I did what the Twitter followers wanted me to do on my show 'Bones,' (characters) Booth and Brennan would've gotten together in the third episode. That would've been a very bad thing for the series. It's complicated but you have to keep your distance."

Show-runner Shonda Rhimes, whose block of prime-time ABC programming on Thursday nights "Grey's Anatomy", "Scan-

dal" and "How to Get Away with Murder" has boosted her fame and has more than 791,000 Twitter followers, puts it into perspective with the disclaimer in the bio of her Twitter account:

"I make stuff up for a living. Remember, it's not real, OK? Don't tweet me your craziness."

Andrew Adashek, head of TV at Twitter, says fans who follow show-runners can get inside information they wouldn't otherwise have access to via dropped

spoilers and hints about upcoming plots.

"It's like getting a director's cut of every episode and people love that," Adashek said.

Added Julie Plec, show-runner of The CW's "The Vampire Diaries" and "The Originals": "I think one thing the fans have realized is you can interact with the stars and that's great, but the stars are sworn to secrecy and not allowed to tell you anything. ... If I decide I want to give something away today and tell a secret, I can because it's my rule."

It can also just be plain entertaining to follow these creative people.

"I think it is safe to say they are super expressive and therefore able to manifest the creativity in a form of engaging twitter content and it is something that fans really, really latch on to," said Adashek.

Not everyone wants to be that accessible. "Teen Wolf" show-runner Jeff Davis used to be on Twitter and closed his account in December 2012.

"There is a lot of deep negativity online that personally I like to stay away from," he said. "It's hard to look at those things online and not feel a sting. The problem with people critiquing online or letting loose their own personal demons online is the individuation. You can't see the other person. You can't see how what you're saying online affects them. And you objectify them and lose all compassion."

Plec empathizes when fans get worked up about a particular storyline and feel the need to communicate that on social media.

"If I had grown up with Twitter I would've been just like them. I would've been tweeting at the 'General Hospital' writers being like, 'Oh my God! How could you do that to Lucky?'" she laughed. "So, I get it."

She says she often turns to Twitter herself to follow the people that she's a fan of. "Probably every ninth tweet is about how much I worship Shonda Rhimes."

Joan Rivers' will leaves money for charities

MARK KENNEDY
AP Drama Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Joan Rivers' left her daughter, Melissa, in charge of her fortune and left money for some of her favorite charities, including Guide Dogs for the Blind, Jewish Guild Healthcare and the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation.

According to Rivers' 2014 will, which was filed in New York State Surrogate's Court, the late comedian made Melissa Rivers her will's executor with "the broadest and most absolute permissible direction" over a fortune that has been estimated as high as \$150 million.

Other charities she singled

out were the New York-based food pantry God's Love We Deliver, the Simon Wiesenthal Center and the



This Oct. 5, 2009 file photo shows Joan Rivers during the 25th International Film and Programme Market for TV, Video, Cable and Satellite, in Cannes, southeastern France.

Associated Press

Jewish Home and Hospital Foundation in Manhattan. Rivers died Sept. 4 at 81 of brain damage due to lack of oxygen. She'd stopped breathing during an endoscopy days earlier. The late comedian asked that her business manager Michael D. Karlin and interior designer Robert Higdon be named co-executors of the living trust. Specifics of her assets and how they will be divided haven't been disclosed.

Bequests were made to her assistants, Sabrina Lott and Jocelyn Pickett, her friend Scott Currie, and Rivers' niece and nephew, Caroline Waxler and Andrew Waxler.



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